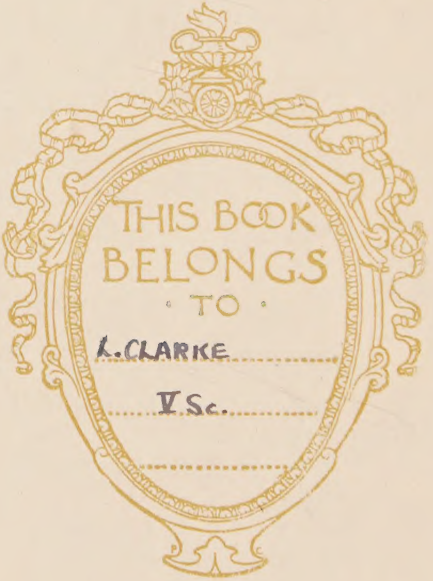
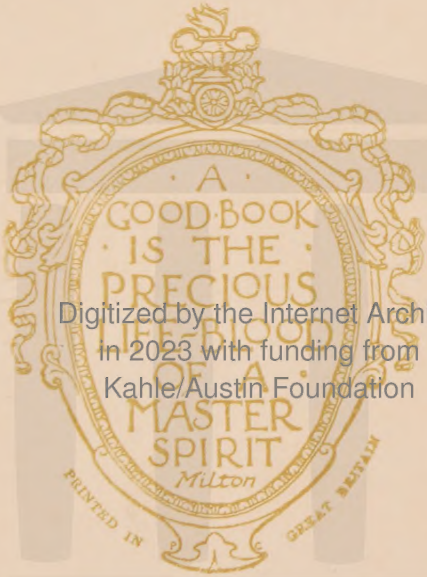

THIS BOOK
BELONGS
TO
L. CLARKE
V Sc.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2023 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/modernessays0000norm

The KINGS TREASURIES OF LITERATURE

GENERAL EDITOR
SIR A·T·QUILLER COUCH

LONDON: J·M·DENT & SONS LTD.

MODERN ESSAYS

SELECTED BY
NORMAN G.
BRETT-JAMES
M.A., B.LITT.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN AT
THE TEMPLE PRESS, LETCHWORTH, HERTS
FIRST PUBLISHED 1924
LAST REPRINTED 1941

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS for the use of copyright essays are due and are hereby cordially tendered to:

Messrs. CHATTO AND WINDUS and Messrs. G. H. DORAN Co. for "On Journal Writers" from *Enjoying Life* by W. N. P. Barbellion; to Mr. HILAIRE BELLOC and Messrs. J. M. DENT AND SONS LTD. for *Carlyle's French Revolution*; to the RT. HON. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL and Messrs. J. M. DENT AND SONS LTD. for "A Rogue's Memoirs" and "Book-Buying" from *Collected Essays and Addresses*; to Messrs. J. M. DENT AND SONS LTD. for *Abraham Lincoln* by Viscount Bryce; to Mr. G. K. CHESTERTON and Messrs. J. M. DENT AND SONS LTD. for *Matthew Arnold*; to Mr. JAMES DOUGLAS and Messrs. CASSELL AND CO. LTD. for "In the Reading Room" from *Adventures in London*; to Mr. A. G. GARDINER and Messrs. J. M. DENT AND SONS LTD. for "On Boswell and His Miracle" from *Pebbles on the Shore*; to Mr. EDMUND GOSSE, Messrs. W. HEINEMANN LTD. and Messrs. CHAS. SCRIBNER'S SONS for "A Volume of Old Plays" and "Gerard's Herbal" from *Gossip in a Library*; to Mr. LOUIS GOLDING for "Arles," reprinted from *To-Day*; to Mrs. G. M. P. WELBY EVERARD, executrix of Mr. Maurice Hewlett and the OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS for "The Early Quakers" and "Wind in the Downs" from *Extemporary Essays*; to Mr. ROBERT LYND, Messrs. GRANT RICHARDS LTD. and Messrs. CHAS. SCRIBNER'S SONS for "The Pleasures of Ignorance" from the volume bearing this title; to Mr. H. J. MASSINGHAM for "The Golden Age"

from *The Challenge*; to Messrs. BURNS, OATES AND WASHBOURNE LTD. for "The Cloud" from *The Colour of Life* by the late Mrs. Meynell; to Messrs. T. FISHER UNWIN LTD. for "The Folly of Education" and "Street Organs" from *The Day Before Yesterday* by Richard Middleton; to Mr. J. MIDDLETON MURRY, Messrs. W. COLLINS SONS AND CO. LTD. and Messrs. E. P. DUTTON AND CO. for "A Neglected Heroine of Shakespeare" from *Countries of the Mind*; to Mr. JOHN MASEFIELD and Messrs. J. M. DENT AND SONS LTD. for *Pilgrim Fathers*; to Mr. H. C. MINCHIN and Messrs. J. M. DENT AND SONS LTD. for "A Lodge in the Forest" and "Over the Fells to Caldbeck" from *Talks and Traits*; to Messrs. HODDER AND STOUGHTON LTD. for "The Art of Packing" from *The Day-Book of Claudius Clear* by the late Sir W. Robertson Nicoll; to Mr. EDWIN PUGH for "Old and New London" from *The City of the World*; to Mr. CECIL ROBERTS for "Il Pulcinella" from *To-Day*; to the Executors of the Rev. Canon Dixon Scott for "Winter, that Rough Nurse," from *A Number of Things*; to Messrs. DUCKWORTH AND CO. for "An Autumn House" from *Roseacre Papers* by Edward Thomas; to Mr. ERNEST RHYS and Messrs. J. M. DENT AND SONS LTD. for *A Rare Traveller*; to Mr. J. LEWIS MAY for "The Old School" from *To-Day*; and to Mr. HOLBROOK JACKSON for "The Art of Holiday" and "Peterpantheism" from *Southward Ho!*

CONTENTS

		PAGE
On Journal-Writers	*W. N. P. Barbellion*	9
Carlyle's "French Revolution"	*Hilaire Belloc*	20
A Rogue's Memoirs	*Augustine Birrell*	37
Book-Buying	*Augustine Birrell*	48
Abraham Lincoln	*Viscount Bryce*	53
Matthew Arnold's Essays	*G. K. Chesterton*	65
In the Reading Room	*James Douglas*	72
On Boswell and his Miracle	*A. G. Gardiner*	77
A Volume of Old Plays	*Edmund Gosse*	82
Gerard's Herbal	*Edmund Gosse*	89
Arles	*Louis Golding*	96
The Art of Holiday	*Holbrook Jackson*	101
Peterpantheism	*Holbrook Jackson*	112
The Early Quakers	*Maurice Hewlett*	117
Wind in the Downs	*Maurice Hewlett*	122
The Pleasures of Ignorance	*Robert Lynd*	126
Cloud	*Alice Mèynell*	132
The Folly of Education	*Richard Middleton*	138
Street-Organs	*Richard Middleton*	143
A Golden Age	*H. J. Massingham*	148
The Pilgrim Fathers	*John Masefield*	155
The Old School	*J. Lewis May*	166
A Lodge in the Forest	*H. C. Minchin*	171
Over the Fells to Caldbeck	*H. C. Minchin*	176
Old and New	*Edwin Pugh*	183

		PAGE
IL PULCINELLA	*Cecil Roberts*	200
WINTER, THAT ROUGH NURSE .	*Canon Dixon Scott*	207
AN AUTUMN HOUSE . . .	*Edward Thomas*	215
A RARE TRAVELLER: W. H. HUDSON	*Ernest Rhys*	224
A NEGLECTED HEROINE OF SHAKESPEARE	*J. Middleton Murry*	235
THE ART OF PACKING . . .	*W. Robertson Nicoll*	251

MODERN ESSAYS

ON JOURNAL-WRITERS

W. N. P. BARBELLION:
Enjoying Life, and other Literary Remains[1]

A JOURNAL is an incondite miscellany, written from day to day, recording the writer's life and addressed either to some particular person, as in Swift's *Journal to Stella* or as in Eugénie de Guérin's *Journal* inscribed if not directly addressed to her beloved brother Maurice, or else implicitly or explicitly dedicated to some abstraction or ideal confidant—in Fanny Burney's diary explicitly to "Nobody," in Maurice de Guérin's *Journal* to "Mon Cahier," in others to the "Reader," to "Posterity," "Kind Friend," and so forth.

The devotee in this *petite chapelle* of literature should beware of shams: drunken Barnabee's *Journal*—that curious and scandalous book published in 1638—is rhymed in Latin verse (accompanied by an English verse translation) describing the author's "pub crawlings" up and down the country; Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year* is certainly an incondite miscellany, but not written from day to day, and not even broken up into chapters; Turgenev's *Diary of a Superfluous Man* is a short story in diary form.

In all their infinite variety, real journals possess this

[1] Published in America by George H. Doran Co.

much in common: they are one and all an irresistible overflow of the writer's life, whether it be a life of adventure, or a life of thought, or a life of the soul. To be sure, if a man be sailing the Amazon, climbing Chimborazo, or travelling to the South Pole, it is most obvious and natural for him to keep a diary. Hence we have Darwin's *Journal of the Voyage of the "Beagle"* and Captain Scott's diary of his immortal expedition. He would indeed be dull of soul who, on encountering strange or unprecedented experiences, felt no desire to write them down. Meeting with great events or great personages startles even the inarticulate into eloquent speech, and the innumerable journals written by soldiers and others, and sometimes published, especially in France[1] during the Great War, show how the fingers of the most unlikely persons do tingle for a pen to describe each day all they see and do and suffer. It is interesting to observe in passing that a similar crop of journals appeared one hundred years ago round about the time of the French Revolution: those of Madame de Staël's circle—Benjamin Constant's and Sismondi's, for example, in France, and in England the journals of Lady Holland, Crabb Robinson, Madame d'Arblay. Many of these, however, were habitual journal-writers, who had been already posting up their diaries before the storm broke, producing in no sense *journaux par occasion*, as all war diaries are and almost all itineraries. Gray's *Journal of his Lakeland Tour* and Boswell's *Journal of a Trip to the Hebrides* are two famous literary journals of travel that readily occur to the mind.

The instinct of the true journal-writer is more

[1] See, for example, the *Diary of a Dead Officer*, by Arthur Græme West; the *Diary of a French Private: War Imprisonment*, by Gaston Riou—the author, however, being a journalist with marked literary gifts.—ED.

profound. To every man his own life is of great interest. But to all inveterate self-chroniclers of whatever rank, in whatever situation or condition of life, their own existence seems so insistently marvellous that at the close of each day, being incontinent, they must needs pour out their sense of wonder into a manuscript book. Let him be only a clerk with spectacles and eternally pushing the pen, yet his journal shall reveal with what rare gusto he pursues his clerical existence. Though he rarely quits his office, life for him is full of delightful hazards and surprises. He will ride his high stool as if astride a caracoling Arab, and at night, having arrived steaming at the inn—even though it be but a bed-sitting room over a tallow-chandler's shop—writes out with an unwearying pen the history of each day's adventures, thus: "Lunched with Brown. Later played a game of 'pills' with old Bumpus, and to-night went to see *A Little Bit of Fluff*."

But Mr. Secretary Pepys is, of course, our great exemplar. "Old Peepy," as Edward FitzGerald called him, was eager to see every new thing, and everything was "pretty to see." The most commonplace affairs had a significance, while a real event became portentous. He rolled each day upon his tongue with the relish of an epicure, and scarce a day passed but his magpie's covetous eye caught some bright and novel object for conveyance to that wonderful larder—the Diary. It is amusing to construct an imaginary picture of him—with all seriousness and heads bent together over the book—participating in the perplexity of that other wonderful child, Marjorie Fleming, who affirmed in her diary of confessions that "the most devilish thing is eight times eight, and seven times seven is what nature itself can't endure."

With Marie Bashkirtseff it was something more than a gusto for life. Life was a passion and a fever that presently overwhelmed her. "When I think of what I shall be when I am twenty," she wrote as a child after looking long in the mirror, "I smack my lips!" And later, when Fate, like a ring of steel, was slowly closing in on her: "I don't curse life; on the contrary, I find it all good—would you believe it, I find it all good, even my tears and sufferings? I like to cry, I like to be in despair, I like to be sad and miserable, and I love life in spite of all." Even the languorous Amiel in the course of his amazing pages here and there bubbles up into ecstasy—and Amiel was a Professor of Moral Philosophy, and a dull one at that.

In the course of every diary will be found entries testifying to the author's pleasure in re-reading his past. This is a curiously constant feature—see, *e.g.*, Tolstoi's Diary, March 20th, 1852. The diarist is a sentimentalist in love with his past, however painful or unprofitable it may have been. Better than any man he knows how that silent artist, the memory, working in the depths, ceaselessly fashions our perhaps dreary or commonplace existence, until the sea one day casts up its beautiful shells, and we are delighted and surprised to find our lives have been so beautiful. Of Pepys, Stevenson remarked that neither Hazlitt nor Rousseau had a more romantic passion for their past —"it clung about his heart like an evergreen." So, in dressing-gown and slippers, before the night fire, your sentimentalist, with finger in the book, like a genie conjures up the days gone by. He and his past keep house together; it is an almost tangible presence, with every feature of which he is familiar—indeed, is it not a row of precious volumes on a shelf, and an article

of furniture in his room? Of an evening poignant memories pull at the strings of his heart and ring the bells, and the whole room is vibrant. Let us not intrude further for very decency's sake.

. . . . . .

"I have left this book locked up for the past fortnight," writes Eugénie de Guérin. "How many things in this gap that will be recorded nowhere, not even here!" And Fanny Burney: "There seems to me something very unsatisfactory in passing year after year without even a memorandum of what you did, etc." To the ego-loving diarist, to take no note of the flight of the present and to forget the past seems like a personal disloyalty to himself: it is an infamous defection to forget or neglect that ever-increasing collection of past selves—those dear dead gentlemen who one after another have tenanted the temple of this flesh and handed on the torch. His journal of self-chronicling he regards as a mausoleum, where with reverent hands he year by year embalms the long dynasty of his person as it descends. To which end he is for ever harvesting his consciousness, anxious to conserve every moment of his existence, every relic of his passage through the world. He counts every kiss and every heart-beat, he collects all the hours of his life and hoards them up with a miserly hand and a connoisseur's taste. You will find his walls hung with mementos, and his escritoire packed with old letters—and probably each annual volume of his journal bound in leather and stored in a fireproof safe. The diarist is a great conservator. As Samuel Butler (of *Erewhon*) said: "One's thoughts" (and he might have added one's days) "fly so fast it's no use trying to put salt on their tails." Hence came

Butler's *Notebook*, and the journals of such reflective writers as Emerson and Thoreau, and of such methodically-minded men as Evelyn and John Wesley.

. . . . . .

Mr. Julius West has given a lively picture of the De Goncourts moving in literary France of the last century, "always with notebook in hand, at any rate metaphorically, anxious not to allow a single trait to escape them —ever on the alert, if not anxious to botanise on their mother's grave, at any rate perfectly willing to fasten upon the confidences of the living as well as of the dead, to capture the flying word, to take the evidences of the unforgiving minute,"—with what results all readers of their colossal journal know.

It is indeed astonishing what a hold the diary habit gains on man. Even as an event or conversation is taking place he will have it mentally trimmed and prepared for its exact position in the daily record, or his observations arranged in a mnemonic list lest they escape his recollection against the evening. Life becomes an accessory to the journal instead of *vice versa*—just so much raw material to be caught, polished, and preserved. The consciousness of the habitual diarist develops a chronic irritability and instantly flicks off into his MS. book every tiniest impression, just as a horse shivers off the flies by means of that extensive muscle underneath the skin which anatomists have named the *panniculus camosus*. "Congreve's nasty wine has given me the heartburn," Swift records in that extraordinary fantasia of tenderness and politics—the *Journal to Stella*. Then there was Patrick's bird intended for Madam Dinglibus, Mrs. Walls of immortal memory, Goody Stoyte and all the gossip. The merest bagatelle was

worth its record. Eugénie de Guérin owned with what delight she described the smallest trifles, such as the little book-lice she observed crawling in the leaves of a volume or on her writing-table. "I do not know their names," she tells us, "but we are acquaintances." One would say that it was a real pain to her to see any of her precious experiences slip out of the net for ever like beautiful scaly fish. "... to describe the incidents of one hour" (she is voicing the despair expressed by so many journal-writers) "would require an eternity."

. . . . . .

Journal-writing, where it is chiefly the impulse for self-expression or self-revelation, is not infrequently fostered by uncongenial or unsympathetic surroundings or by incurable misfortune. So beset, the diarist, timid and eager as a child, flees into the tower of his soul and raises the drawbridge, as Francis Thompson said of the young Shelley.

For a journal can be used as a "grief-cheating device, a mode of escape and withdrawal." It is like the brown eyes of some faithful hound who bears and suffers all and yet regards his master as supreme. It is a perpetual flattery, an inexhaustible cruse of oil for the sore and sometimes swollen ego. To keep a diary is to make a secret liaison of the firmest and most sentimental kind; the writer can fling off all restraint and all the trappings which are necessarily worn to front the antagonism of the world. It is a monstrous self-indulgence wherein he remembers his friends and he remembers his enemies —with candour; he remembers his own griefs and grievances; screened from the public view in the security of his own room he can—and it must be

confessed he occasionally does—gaze at himself as before a mirror, remembering, Malvolio-like, who praised his yellow garters.

The famous *Journal Intime*, which ran to 17,000 folio pages of MS. and consumed countless hours of its author's life, was written by a man who realised that he had been "systematically and deliberately isolated"—"premature despair and deepest discouragement have been my constant portion." Marie Bashkirtseff also was driven into the subterranean existence of journal-writer by the hard facts of her short life, towards the end of it living more and more within its pages, and thus in the end wringing out of a stubborn destiny her indefeasible claims to recognition. "I do not know why writing has become a necessity to me," muses the tragic sister of Maurice de Guérin—himself a tragedy and a journal-writer. "Who understands this overflowing of my soul, this need to reveal itself before God, before someone?"

. . . . . .

In reading subjectively-written diaries one constantly comes across the expression of this same desire for self-revelation and self-surrender. Incredible as it appears to the ordinary secretive human being, this very common kind of diarist longs to give himself away, to communicate himself to some other person *in toto*; with pathetic gesture the passionate creature offers himself up for scrutiny, sick of his own secret self, anxious to be swallowed up in somebody else's total comprehension.

"On dit," wrote Maurice de Guérin under date March 23rd, 1834, "qu'au jugement dernier le secret des consciences sera révélé à tout l'univers: je voudrais

qu'il en fût ainsi de moi dès aujourd'hui et que la vue de mon âme fût ouverte à tous venants."

Such journals are in nowise comparable with the confessions of religious journals—among saintly women always a favourite mode of unburdening themselves—pale crepuscular souls fluttering through pages of self-disparagement by the aid of the lamp and a copious inkhorn, never intended for public view. "Whenever the last trumpet shall sound, I will present myself before the sovereign Judge with this book in my hand and loudly proclaim, 'Thus have I acted, these were my thoughts, such was I.'" This memorable opening to Rousseau's *Confessions*, which shocked John Morley for its "dreadful exaltation," is the typical brag in most journals of confession. With defiant pride of personality Marie Bashkirtseff, in her marvellous volume of self-portraiture, constantly emphasises for her readers that she conceals nothing; "I not only say all the time what I think, but I never contemplate hiding for an instant what might make me appear ridiculous or prove to my disadvantage. For the rest I think myself too admirable for censure."

Passionate egotism knows no shame. Everything—however scandalous—goes down in a self-revelation beside which the little disclosures of essayists like Montaigne, Lamb, De Quincey sink to the level of dull propriety. Voltaire said of Rousseau that he wouldn't mind being hanged if they stuck his name on the gibbet. I suppose to the average man Raskolnikoff in *Crime and Punishment*, moving to his confession with the inevitableness almost of an animal tropism, is easier to understand than, say, Strindberg, the author of that terrible book, *The Confessions of a Fool*, or even Pepys, whose diary of peccadilloes and little vanities was

certainly written down in cypher, but only to conceal them from his wife.

. . . . . .

The introspective diarist is almost a type by himself, distinguished by his psychological insight and cold scientific analysis of himself. Of these Amiel stands easily at the head. "For a psychologist," he writes in the *Journal Intime*, "it is extremely interesting to be readily and directly conscious of the complications of one's own organism and the play of its several parts. . . . A feeling like this makes personal existence a perpetual astonishment and curiosity. Instead of only seeing the world around me, I analyse myself. Instead of being single, all of a piece, I become legion, multitude, a whirlwind—a very cosmos." Amiel's self-consciousness was an enormous lens and, like other microscopists, he found worlds within worlds, and as much complexity and finish in small as in great.

The passion of the introspecter is for truth of self. He should be full of curiosity about himself and quiet self-raillery, delighting to trip himself up in some little vanity, to track down some carefully secreted motive, to quizz and watch himself live with horrible vigilance and complete self-detachment. He must be his own detective and footpad, his own eavesdropper, and his own stupid Boswell. His books should be La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère, and one of his favourite occupations to measure himself alongside other men. Marie Bashkirtseff thought she was like Jules Vallès, of whom she had read in Zola. "But," she adds the next instant, "we look so stupid when we appraise ourselves like that." It was the same agile self-consciousness which discovered to her while weeping before

a mirror the right expression for her Magdalen, who should look " not at the sepulchre but at nothing at all." Amiel, too, gathered hints for self-elucidation, especially in the eternal self-chroniclings of Maine de Biran, in whose diary he thought to see himself reflected, though he also found differences which cheered and consoled him.

. . . . . .

Yet this way madness lies. For too complete a divorce from self provokes self-antipathy, too great a preoccupation with self leads to self-sickness, and, by the strangest paradox, egotism to self-annihilation.

CARLYLE'S "FRENCH REVOLUTION"

HILAIRE BELLOC: *Introductory Essay to "Everyman" Edition.*

THE position of Carlyle in English Literature will necessarily be twofold, for he chose to add to his general survey of thought the particular task of the historian.

The number of men who have chosen the field of letters in general, and who have added to it in any important degree the department of History, is very small. Dickens cannot be said to have done it seriously in his little history, nor Thackeray in his Essay on the Georges, and if we consider the literature of other nations the same holds good.

Conversely, though the historian properly so called who has dipped into general letters is common enough, yet there have been very few historians, whether in England, France or Germany, who did not profess to stand upon their history rather than upon their other work.

Two men, however, have particularly chosen to combine the functions of philosopher and of historian, and to express their philosophy in many works as serious and as profound as their historical writings; these two men are Taine and Carlyle.

It must be clearly recognised in any approach to an appreciation of their position, that a man who so attempts the double function stands under a sharper light than can any other sort of writer. And that for this reason: that the work of the historian is justly recognised by

men to be one of supreme importance, and to be one that, while it requires literary power for its fulfilment, requires also twenty other qualities as rarely possessed or as difficult of attainment. It is of supreme importance, because upon a just presentation of the past depends all our concrete judgment of the present. History is the object-lesson of politics, and unless history is presented to us truly, it had better not be presented to us at all; upon history is based our judgment of men so far as long experience can inform it, and if the picture is false, rather than receive it we had better be left to our instinct and to the little circle of exact knowledge conveyed to us by our own experience.

It is, therefore, principally as an historian that Carlyle in England (as Taine in France) will be judged. His position as a writer is secure; his wisdom in entering the field of history is one upon which debate can still be fruitful, and criticism of value.

What motive was it which moved such men, and Carlyle especially, to enter that field? It was the great expansion of historical knowledge which coincided with the moment when his own powers were at the fullest, coupled with the fact that all the reaction which Carlyle himself represented could find its best arguments in the domain of human actions.

If a thesis has to be maintained which purports to be "practical," and to chastise the tendency to abstraction, that thesis is best maintained by a continual appeal to fact. The vague and generous ideals of the young are combated in this way by the old, and it is generally true that anyone who quarrels with a deductive and ideal system bases his quarrel upon direct, concrete, and personal experience. History is but such experience enlarged.

It is remarkable that with so incisive and so rebellious a mind Carlyle should have fallen so easily, where history was concerned, into the general current of his generation. Indeed, the further we are separated in time from the men of that generation, the more shall we wonder that such doubtful and ill-supported theories should have obtained not only an universal recognition, but a sort of "passive obedience" from the men who filled what is called the "Victorian Era" in literature. For example—the whole of that group was filled with "Teutonians." To study the "Teutonic Race," as it was called—that is, to study North Germany, and to confirm the cousinship between the English and the North German peoples—was nearly all the task of history. There went with this a strong appetite for the romantic in history as in every other department of letters. Violent action, characters in high light and in deep shadow were compelled to appear in chronicles as much as in novels; in rhetoric as in poetry, and indeed throughout the whole literary effort of the time. To both these tendencies Carlyle easily succumbed.

It might be advanced that he was not a disciple but an originator, and that but for him neither would the English of the middle nineteenth century have developed that passion of theirs for things German, nor would the picturesque, vivid and romantic history which Green, Freeman, and even Kinglake wrote have come into existence. It is certain that but for Carlyle the double current would not have become so strong as it did become. It is equally certain that but for him the two influences of admiration for the German and the romantic would hardly have coalesced. Yet it is true that he did not originate either the one tendency or the other; the one proceeded from the natural religious

sympathy between all Protestant peoples; the other, upon the contrary, from the maturing of French influence upon England, and that enormously increasing power which the Revolution bequeathed to the Latins, and which is only now beginning to bear fruit.

The romantic movement began not with Byron or with Wordsworth, but with Rousseau; the natural alliance of the Protestant peoples began not with Waterloo, but with that treaty between Austria and France in the middle of the eighteenth century, which is perhaps the greatest turning-point in the story of European relations.

It must also be remembered that in England there were separate causes all making both for the Teutonic sentiment and for the romantic. England had never possessed a continuous classical tradition. What Milton had begun and Dryden continued withered long before the first of them had been dead a hundred years. In England, again, the romantic spirit had received no chastisement from the facts of war. England alone of European nations had not suffered invasion, dynastic change or serious internal disorder, and it is in peace and in leisure that the romantic illusion flourishes best. England was passing also through a period of abnormal expansion; all her energies were strained to the utmost; there was a vast growth everywhere. As for the German influence, a German dynasty, German allies, the momentary eclipse of the Italian spirit throughout Europe, and the crude beginnings of philology all helped to foster it and to maintain it.

All this is passing to-day; much of it has already passed. The theories of race based on Max Müller's researches are doubted; they have certainly failed at the test. The rudimentary anthropology of our

grandfathers has been corrected by innumerable experiments and by a vastly extended research. Catholicism has organised a full defensive system, and has proceeded from that to carry the war into Africa, and though we have not had in England itself an experience of disaster, yet the pleasing and somewhat virile illusions of romanticism have been so bled out of Europe in general that we ourselves can hardly maintain them.

In a word, we are in a position to look steadily back at the whole historical work of Carlyle and to judge it, as yet, without undue lack of sympathy, but already with sufficient detachment. We are able to present to ourselves and to answer without passion (and with a considerable certainty) the great question which must be asked of all historians, Did he make dead men live again? There are many who call up phantoms, and many who can present the corpse of the past; there are few who can cause it to rise and act before you with its own body and its own soul. To what extent was he of these few?

In order to answer that question the very first thing to be done is to consider the defects which have been noted in his writings.

It has been said (we will see in a moment with how much or how little justice) that Carlyle could not sympathise with things separate from the conditions of his own birth. He was a peasant and a Calvinist, and it is maintained that to things of which the peasant or the Calvinist are incapable he had no avenue of approach, and therefore that he had no understanding of them.

If that be so, his book upon the French Revolution must be the very best test which we could apply to his powers, for the French Revolution was essentially the

work of leisured men, of highly trained intelligences, and of men whom the process of academic education had removed as far as possible from the peasant-life of Europe. Again, it was distinctly the product of a Catholic nation—of a nation, that is, with a contempt of fatalism, an adherence to abstract dogmas, and a military hatred of mere force and of the religions of fear.

It is secondly objected to Carlyle that he could not justly deal with history on account of a constant preoccupation of his: the desire to excite the emotions of his readers.

It has been thirdly objected to him that in the particular case of the French Revolution he could not properly delineate the French character, because he had a most imperfect acquaintance with the language of France, and no acquaintance whatever with its people.

Added to these criticisms, another of some weight has often been heard. It is the criticism which all can make against the few historians of modern times: the accusation of inaccuracy.

Now if Carlyle's work be examined upon such lines, it is not difficult to conclude that the main part of the charge against him is false.

Every man is something; if he is not a Calvinist he is a Catholic, an Agnostic or a Mohammedan; if he is not a peasant, he is a shopkeeper or a noble or a soldier. Every man that writes history must therefore have an initial difficulty in comprehending some, and probably most of the characters he sets out to portray. The measure of his power is not to be found in the extent of this difficulty, but in his success in overcoming it. For instance, the best monograph on Robert Burns has been written by a quiet, wealthy man, a foreigner,

and a Picard at that, writing in Paris and in the French tongue; and success of that sort, precisely because it has overcome so much initial difficulty, is the prime success of the historian. So with Carlyle. It is not astonishing that he should have written the *Frederick*, it is astonishing that he should have written the *Revolution*; and our admiration for the effort and for its result increases with every new thing we learn about Carlyle, and with every new difficulty which we discover to have lain in his way.

A particular instance of this will emphasise my contention. It had been truly remarked of Carlyle as of Dickens, that there was never a single gentleman in his books. The French Revolution was crammed with gentlemen; very few indeed of the actors in it were of another social rank than that which is called in England by the name of "the gentry." Consider, then, Carlyle's portrait of Mirabeau; he certainly makes him something too much of an actor, and something too little of an artist. The inherited dignity of bearing, the firmness of gesture, and the regard for proportion which mark his rank are not present in these pages. But read this passage, and ask yourself whether it has ever been excelled by any writer but Michelet.

"Towards such work, in such manner, marches he, this singular Riquetti Mirabeau. In fiery rough figure, with black Samson locks under the slouch-hat, he steps along there. A fiery fuliginous mass, which could not be choked and smothered, but would fill all France with smoke. And now it has got *air*; it will burn its whole substance, its whole smoke-atmosphere too, and fill all France with flame. Strange lot! Forty years of that smouldering, with foul fire-damp and vapour enough;—and like a burning mountain he blazes

heaven-high; and for twenty-three resplendent months pours out, in flame and molten fire-torrents, all that is in him, the Pharos and Wonder-sign of an amazed Europe;—and then lies hollow, cold forever! Pass on, thou questionable Gabriel Honoré, the greatest of them all: in the whole National Deputies, in the whole Nation, there is none like and none second to thee."

The words are theatrical. "Whole national deputies" is simply bad English. The "thou" and the "thee" are grotesque—but the touch is true.

What I mean is this, that if you had known Mirabeau yourself and had read this passage long after his death, you would have said, "Good lord! how vivid!" long before you had begun to criticise this or that slip in the appreciation. You would in that portrait of Mirabeau have had called up before you Mirabeau as you had known him. So powerful is the modelling that its failure to give the *refinement* of the original would have lain lightly upon your mind, as you were filled with a recollection of his *force*. Carlyle would seem to you to have put a living spirit again into the body of the man, and that living spirit would have been the spirit that you had known.

So it is almost universally where he has to draw the portrait of a man.

Whether the second of the Lameths knew English (I believe he did), or whether in his old age he ever read this book (he had ample time to do it, for he survived its publication by seventeen years), whether he was even acquainted with the name of Carlyle—I do not know; but I am certain that he, who had known Mirabeau, did, if ever he read this passage, stand startled at a resurrection from the dead.

There are exceptions. It is no just appreciation of

Carlyle's work to ignore them; on the contrary, these exceptions help us even better than his successes to appreciate the quality of his genius. These exceptions are even numerous. They are to be discovered wherever a character of some complexity and, if I may so express myself, of "varying grain," is presented to Carlyle's deep and rapid carving, where the man he is dealing with is not of one stuff throughout.

Two very excellent examples of such failures are his pictures of the King and of Robespierre. In both the delineation is a task of very considerable difficulty; both had characters highly complex and to some extent self-contradictory; both escape from the power of a pen which was creative, but incapable of analysis.

Louis XVI. was not a weak lump of a man. He never upon any single occasion—and he lived through greater dangers than any modern ruler has lived—showed a sign of fear. He fought for his principles to the very end; he conscientiously deliberated every act of importance which he undertook, and that is a rare and convincing sort of strength. Louis XVI. came of a stock nervous to the point of disease. He would have grown up (under most circumstances) shy, thin, perhaps consumptive, and even more terrified than was his grandfather of intercourse with statesmen and soldiers. He would probably have died young. The extreme care spent upon him by doctors, a careful and continually ordered diet, perpetual exercise in the open air, all these artifices bestowed upon him before he was twenty a sort of fictitious health. He grew up robust, somnolent, of a large appetite, and with all his nervous weakness run to lethargy. Here was a man who could not be jotted down in a few deep strokes of the graver, nor to be seen clearly in high lights and shadows. Here was a

man who could not by any manipulation be made into a dramatic figure; therefore, to put it bluntly, Carlyle dismisses him.

Robespierre was descended from a long line of squires, probably Irish. He was eloquent, pedantic, enthusiastic, cold, of excellent breeding, of a convinced faith, readily angered against persons, passionately loved, of a valueless judgment in dealing with masses of men, and often at fault with individuals. Here, again, is a character which cannot by any possibility serve the purposes of melodrama; he was not a monster or a coward, nor even a great ideal figure, as Hamel would regard him. You cannot deal with Robespierre unless you deal with the complexity of his position and of his mind. You must analyse the phenomenon closely, and you must put him in a separate place right aside from the furious and simple passions by which he was surrounded but from which he lived apart. Carlyle was either unable to do this or did not know that he had to do it; the result is that his Robespierre has no resemblance either to the original or to any possible man. He is of wax.[1]

But these, I repeat, are exceptions, and the very causes which make Louis and Robespierre escape him are proofs of the driving energy which lay behind his mind. The very fact that he cannot work in some material enhances the extraordinary power with which he moulded all other material that fell to his hand.

When it is objected that Carlyle could not deal justly with history on account of his preoccupation of exciting

[1] For instance, the famous epithet "Sea-green" is based on *one* phrase of Madame de Staël's misread. What Madame de Staël said was that the prominent veins in Robespierre's forehead showed greenish-blue against his fair and somewhat pale skin. But his complexion was healthy, and his expression, if anything, winning.

the emotions, we are on firmer ground. We are dealing here with his art rather than with his history, and we are dealing with the great vice to which art such as his is tempted.

In very early youth a man capable by his style of violently arousing the emotions of his readers, of striking time and again the spring which moves us like a phrase of music, may forget himself, and may merely over-indulge his power. He will fall into such an excess as it were unconsciouly. But as his life proceeds, as his style is criticised and acquires public recognition, he cannot but become conscious of his art; he will tend to repeat certain tricks of it, and he cannot but depend too much upon those tricks to secure him a perpetuity of success and save him the fatigue of creation. He suffers the temptation which falls in another sphere to the orator (for both are rhetoricians), and he intends to yield to that temptation; to force the note. From this fault Carlyle's style after his thirtieth year undoubtedly suffers. As he grew older his straining for the vivid got worse and worse like Swinburne's alliterations, Browning's obscurity, Wordsworth's "common phrases," or Gladstone's trick of a verbose confusion. Such temptations come only to the great, and it behoves us to be very careful how we charge them with their faults, for we must remember how hardly any great man has escaped them, and how, to lesser men, the temptation itself is impossible. Nevertheless, it is true that the temptation, as it was presented to Carlyle, was only too successful. His art is spoilt by a perpetual tautening of the bow.

I will here quote two passages which should support my contention: the first, as I think, spontaneous; the second false.

The first is near the opening of the seventh chapter of Book IV. in Part III., and begins the trial of the Queen; it is as follows:

"There are few Printed things one meets with of such tragic, almost ghastly, significance as those bald pages of the *Bulletin du Tribunal Révolutionnaire*, which bear Title *Trial of the Widow Capet.* Dim, dim, as if in disastrous eclipse; like the pale kingdoms of Dis! Plutonic Judges, Plutonic Tinville; encircled, nine times, with Styx and Lethe, with Fire-Phlegethon and Cocytus named of Lamentation! The very witnesses summoned are like Ghosts . . . they themselves are all hovering over death and doom. . . ."

Consider the qualities of these lines. They open with a simple phrase. The phrase, the consideration of his subject, excite him at once to dithyramb. The rhythm is natural and open. The very vowels of the syllables are consonant to horror, the cadence rises to the wail of the word "Lamentation." Its consonants possess the regular though not excessive alliteration of poetical English. It falls and ends like a gong sounding the word "Doom."

Turn now to the second, and see whether these same qualities are not here purposely and forcibly struck upon the metal of his writing rather than appearing as something inherent to the quality of that writing itself.

"One other thing, or rather other things, we will mention; and no more: The Blonde Perukes; the Tannery at Meudon. Great talk is of these *Perruques Blondes*: O Reader, they are made from the heads of guillotined Women! The locks of a Duchess, etc., etc." . . ., and so forth to the end of the chapter,

twenty lines more: "Alas! then, is man's civilisation only a wrapping through which the savage of him . . ." and so on.

This is bad. It is all forced. The perpetual "we" of his emphatic manner is introduced to no great purpose. He is writing rapidly. He intended to "mention" one thing—he thinks of a second (both are false) and is too hasty to remould the sentence. He adds "no more," to hide his error and make it pompous. Each phrase is affected. Why "Great talk is"? Why "O reader"? Why the excessive commonplace and well-worn tags of the last sentence picked out in an unusual order? It was because he felt his own interest flagging and his pen at fault that he had deliberate recourse to tinsel of this kind.

So much then for the chief fault which can justly be discovered in this great and enduring work. It is easier to take up again the task of defence. I will allude in particular to the charge of inaccuracy, and say at once that Carlyle is without question one of the most accurate historians that ever put pen to paper.

He writes in that method which of all others most compels a man to errors in matters of detail. Fugue: a very vivid presentment: the making of one's subject move before one; the giving of its characters a life of their own such as we give to the characters of fiction —all these high efforts in an historian are direct causes of minute inaccuracy. The extent to which Carlyle escaped that inaccuracy is positively astounding. It has latterly been my business to comment upon one of the latest editions of his work which has been produced with voluminous footnotes at Oxford. Here there was no excuse at all for inaccuracy. The book was dull, pedantic, and badly put together. It was a

purely mechanical piece of work, and all the editor had to do was to verify every reference he made and to see that the spelling and the dates were correct.

Yet I have found in this edition at least five errors to one of Carlyle's.

Here is a curious and instructive instance. In speaking of Napoleon's rank before Toulon, Carlyle calls him a major at a moment when he *may* have held that rank or *may* have been colonel: it is a point not yet decided, and perhaps never to be decided. The records are imperfect: the time was a hurried and muddled one. Napoleon was certainly in a higher than a battery command, but not yet a general officer. The Oxford edition elaborately corrects Carlyle and makes Napoleon a captain!

It cannot be too often repeated by those who have the honour of English historical science at heart that we have in Carlyle not only in his *Frederick*—where everyone conceded it—but here in the *Revolution* an admirable instance of care and of correction. Michelet is perhaps a greater man, and certainly a greater historian, but in accuracy Carlyle is his superior. Mignet's little book alone perhaps of the early authorities falls into less errors, while in the midst of modern research Aulard is perhaps the only worker who would have a right to contrast his painstaking with that of the English writer. Taine is nowhere; but then Taine was not even trying to tell the truth, and that makes a vast difference where accuracy is concerned.

It is again true of Carlyle that he had but an imperfect acquaintance with the French language, and hardly any acquaintance with the French character. It remains true that by some sort of miracle he accomplished successfully the task he had set himself. It is some-

what as though Victor Hugo had managed to write not a great play (which he did write), but a thorough history of Oliver Cromwell.

Thus Carlyle comprehended one chief factor of the Revolution: the mob. Alone of all European peoples, the French are able to organise themselves from below in large masses, and Paris, which wrought the Revolution, can do it better than the rest of France. A French mob can march in column without a leader, and a Parisian mob can not only march in column, but in a rough fashion deploy when the column debouches upon some open space. It is almost incredible, but it is true.

Now of all the writers of his time Carlyle was, one would have thought, the least able to understand this. He could see nothing in acephalous mankind. It was the whole of his philosophy that men cannot so organise themselves, that they need leaders and strong men, and all the rest of it. Yet so thoroughly has he got inside his subject, so vitally has he raised it up and made it move of its own life, that in his book you see the French mob doing precisely what he would have told you, had you asked him, no mob could do. When he describes them you see them doing what as a fact they did, and moving in a fashion which, as a fact, was their own. When he stops to comment upon them, as he does from time to time, he is often wrong, but when the description begins he becomes right again by a pure instinct for visualising, and for making men act in harmony and in concert in his book.

His inacquaintance with the French character does certainly make him misunderstand the battles. Where he is at his best in his other works, there he is at his worst in the *Revolution*. His fighting is all wrong.

Everybody knows for instance that Bonaparte lost one of his guns in Vendémiaire, there was no "whiff of grape shot," and what is worse, he does not present the great battles of '93 and '94 in their true perspective. He does not show the victories "Pursuing the Terror like furies," and throughout the work the armies which are the meaning and the guidance of the Revolution come in as it were by accident and give no clue.

But there is another point where his ignorance of the French people and his peculiar ignorance of their religion might have led him far more astray, and where he is triumphantly successful; and that is in his portraiture of French violence, and of French ferocity. He had not in his life seen anything violent or ferocious. It was sheer creative power which enabled him to project upon his screen the actualities of which he had read, and there is perhaps no other English writer who has done it; so alien is violence to our national character and so utterly removed is it from our national experience.

The energy of the Revolution, one might conclude, found in the depths of this man who had never been near the sound of arms or the vision of an insurgent populace, something congenial: some ancient strength in the Scotch inherited from mediæval freedom arose in him and answered the French appeal. It did for him what the story of Napoleon did for Victor Hugo: it "blew the creative gale"—"le souffle createur."

Here is the peculiar merit of this book, and here is what may preserve it even when taste has so changed that its rhetoric shall have become tedious and that a classical reaction shall have rendered repulsive the anarchic outbursts of its prose. He was inspired. The enormity of the action moved him as the *Marseillaise* can still move the young conscripts upon the march when

they hear it from a distant place and go forward to the call of it. The Revolution filled him as he proceeded, and was, in a sense, co-author with him of the shock, the flames, and the roar, the innumerable feet, and the songs which together build up what we read achieved in these volumes.

A ROGUE'S MEMOIRS

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL: *Essays and Addresses* (1884)

ONE is often tempted by the devil to forswear the study of history altogether as the pursuit of the Unknowable. "How is it possible," he whispers in our ear, as we stand gloomily regarding the portly calf-bound volumes without which no gentleman's library is complete, "how is it possible to suppose that you have there, on your shelves, the actual facts of history—a true record of what men, dead long ago, felt and thought?" Yet, if we have not, I for one, though of a literary turn, would sooner spend my leisure playing skittles with boors than in reading sonorous lies in stout volumes.

It is not so much [wilily insinuates the Tempter] that these renowned authors lack knowledge. Their habit of giving an occasional reference (though the verification of these is usually left to the malignancy of a rival and less popular historian) argues at least some reading. No; what is wanting is ignorance, carefully acquired and studiously maintained. This is no paradox. To carry the truisms, theories, laws, language of to-day, along with you in your historical pursuits, is to turn the muse of history upside down—a most disrespectful proceeding—and yet to ignore them—to forget all about them—to hang them up with your hat and coat in the hall, to remain there whilst you sit in the library composing your immortal work, which is so happily to combine all that is best in Gibbon and Macaulay—a sneerless Gibbon and an impartial Macaulay—is a task which, if it be not impossible is, at all events, of huge difficulty.

Another blemish in English historical work has been

noticed by the Rev. Charles Kingsley, and may therefore be referred to by me without offence. Your standard historians, having no unnatural regard for their most indefatigable readers, the wives and daughters of England, feel it incumbent upon them to pass over, as unfit for dainty ears and dulcet tones, facts, and rumours of facts, which none the less often determined events by stirring the strong feelings of your ancestors, whose conduct, unless explained by this light, must remain enigmatical.

When to these anachronisms of thought and omissions of fact you have added the dishonesty of the partisan historian and the false glamour of the picturesque one, you will be so good as to proceed to find the present value of history!

Thus far the Enemy of Mankind:

An admirable lady orator is reported lately to have "brought down" Exeter Hall by observing, "in a low but penetrating voice," that the Devil was a very stupid person. It is true that Ben Jonson is on the side of the lady, but I am far too orthodox to entertain any such opinion; and though I have, in this instance of history, so far resisted him as to have refrained from sending my standard historians to the auction mart—where, indeed, with the almost single exception of Mr. Grote's *History of Greece* (the octavo edition in twelve volumes), prices rule so low as to make cartage a consideration—I have still of late found myself turning off the turnpike of history to loiter down the primrose paths of men's memoirs of themselves and their times.

Here at least, so we argue, we are comparatively safe. Anachronisms of thought are impossible; omissions out of regard for female posterity unlikely, and as for party spirit, if found, it forms part of what lawyers call the *res gestæ*, and has therefore a value of its own. Against the perils of the picturesque who will insure us?

But when we have said all this, and, sick of prosing, would begin reading, the number of really readable memoirs is soon found to be but few. This is, indeed, unfortunate; for it launches us off on another prose-journey by provoking the question, What makes memoirs interesting?

Is it necessary that they should be the record of a noble character? Certainly not. We remember Pepys, who — well, never mind what he does. We call to mind Cellini; *he* runs behind a fellow-creature, and with "admirable address" sticks a dagger in the nape of his neck, and long afterwards records the fact, almost with reverence, in his life's story. Can anything be more revolting than some portions of the revelation Benjamin Franklin was pleased to make of himself in writing? And what about Rousseau? Yet, when we have pleaded guilty for these men, a modern Savonarola, who had persuaded us to make a bonfire of their works, would do well to keep a sharp look-out, lest at the last moment we should be found substituting *Pearson on the Creed* for Pepys, Coleridge's *Friend* for Cellini, John Foster's *Essays* for Franklin, and Roget's *Bridgewater Treatise* for Rousseau.

Neither will it do to suppose that the interest of a memoir depends on its writer having been concerned in great affairs, or lived in stirring times. The dullest memoirs written even in English, and not excepting those maimed records of life known as "religious biography," are the work of men of the "attaché" order, who, having been mixed up in events which the newspapers of the day chronicled as "Important Intelligence," were not unnaturally led to cherish the belief that people would like to have from their pens full, true and particular accounts of all that then

happened, or, as they, if moderns, would probably prefer to say, transpired. But the World, whatever an over-bold Exeter Hall may say of her old associate the Devil, is not a stupid person, and declines to be taken in twice; and turning a deaf ear to the most painstaking and trustworthy accounts of deceased Cabinets and silenced Conferences, goes journeying along her broad way, chuckling over some old joke in Boswell, and reading with fresh delight the all-about-nothing letters of Cowper and Lamb.

How then does a man—be he good or bad—big or little—a philosopher or a fribble—St. Paul or Horace Walpole—make his memoirs interesting?

To say that the one thing needful is individuality is not quite enough. To be an individual is the inevitable, and in most cases the unenviable, lot of every child of Adam. Each one of us has, like a tin soldier, a stand of his own. To have an individuality is no sort of distinction, but to be able to make it felt in writing is not only distinction but under favouring circumstances immortality.

Have we not all some correspondents, though probably but few, from whom we never receive a letter without feeling sure that we shall find inside the envelope something written that will make us either glow with the warmth or shiver with the cold of our correspondent's life? But how many other people are to be found, good, honest people too, who no sooner take pen in hand than they stamp unreality on every word they write. It is a hard fate, but they cannot escape it. They may be as literal as the late Earl Stanhope, as painstaking as Bishop Stubbs, as much in earnest as the Prime Minister—their lives may be noble, their aims high, but no sooner do they seek to narrate to us

their story, than we find it is not to be. To hearken to them is past praying for. We turn from them as from a guest who has outstayed his welcome. Their writing wearies, irritates, disgusts.

Here then, at last, we have the two classes of memoir writers—those who manage to make themselves felt, and those who do not. Of the latter, a very little is a great deal too much—of the former we can never have enough.

What a liar was Benvenuto Cellini!—who can believe a word he says? To hang a dog on his oath would be a judicial murder. Yet when we lay down his *Memoirs* and let our thoughts travel back to those far-off days he tells us of, there we see him standing, in bold relief, against the black sky of the past, the very man he was. Not more surely did he, with that rare skill of his, stamp the image of Clement VII. on the papal currency than he did the impress of his own singular personality upon every word he spoke and every sentence he wrote.

We ought, of course, to hate him, but do we? A murderer he has written himself down. A liar he stands self-convicted of being. Were anyone in the nether world bold enough to call him thief, it may be doubted whether Rhadamanthus would award him the damages for which we may be certain he would loudly clamour. Why do we not hate him? Listen to him:

> Upon my uttering these words, there was a general outcry, the noblemen affirming that I promised too much. But one of them, who was a great philosopher, said in my favour, "From the admirable symmetry of shape and happy physiognomy of this young man, I venture to engage that he will perform all he promises, and more." The Pope replied, "I am of the same opinion"; then calling Trajano, his

gentleman of the bed-chamber, he ordered him to fetch me five hundred ducats.

And so it always ended; suspicions, aroused most reasonably, allayed most unreasonably, and then—ducats. He deserved hanging, but he died in his bed. He wrote his own memoirs after a fashion that ought to have brought posthumous justice upon him, and made them a literary gibbet, on which he should swing, a creaking horror, for all time; but nothing of the sort has happened. The rascal is so symmetrical, and his physiognomy, as it gleams upon us through the centuries, so happy, that we cannot withhold our ducats, though we may accompany the gift with a shower of abuse.

This only proves the profundity of an observation made by Mr. Bagehot—a man who carried away into the next world more originality of thought than is now to be found in the Three Estates of the Realm. Whilst remarking upon the extraordinary reputation of the late Francis Horner and the trifling cost he was put to in supporting it, Mr. Bagehot said that it proved the advantage of "keeping an atmosphere."

The common air of heaven sharpens men's judgments. Poor Horner, but for that kept atmosphere of his, always surrounding him, would have been bluntly asked, "What he had done since he was breeched," and in reply he could only have uttered something about the currency. As for our especial rogue Cellini, the question would probably have assumed this shape: "Rascal, name the crime you have not committed, and account for the omission."

But these awkward questions are not put to the lucky people who keep their own atmospheres. The critics, before they can get at them, have to step out of the everyday air, where only achievements count

and the Decalogue still goes for something, into the kept atmosphere, which they have no sooner breathed than they begin to see things differently, and to measure the object thus surrounded with a tape of its own manufacture. Horner—poor, ugly, a man neither of words nor deeds—becomes one of our great men; a nation mourns his loss and erects his statue in the Abbey. Mr. Bagehot gives several instances of the same kind, but he does not mention Cellini, who is, however, in his own way, an admirable example.

You open his book—a Pharisee of the Pharisees. Lying indeed! Why, you hate prevarication. As for murder, your friends know you too well to mention the subject in your hearing, except in immediate connection with capital punishment. You are, of course, willing to make some allowance for Cellini's time and place—the first half of the sixteenth century and Italy. "Yes," you remark, "Cellini shall have strict justice at my hands." So you say as you settle yourself in your chair and begin to read. We seem to hear the rascal laughing in his grave. His spirit breathes upon you from his book—peeps at you roguishly as you turn the pages. His atmosphere surrounds you; you smile when you ought to frown, chuckle when you should groan, and—O final triumph!—laugh aloud when, if you had a rag of principle left, you would fling the book into the fire. Your poor moral sense turns away with a sigh, and patiently awaits the conclusion of the second volume.

How cautiously does he begin, how gently does he win your ear by his seductive piety! I quote from Mr. Roscoe's translation:

> It is a duty incumbent on upright and credible men of all ranks, who have performed anything noble or praise-

worthy, to record, in their own writing, the events of their lives, yet they should not commence this honourable task before they have passed their fortieth year. Such, at least, is my opinion, now that I have completed my fifty-eighth year, and am settled in Florence, where, considering the numerous ills that constantly attend human life, I perceive that I have never before been so free from vexations and calamities, or possessed of so great a share of content and health as at this period. Looking back on some delightful and happy events of my life, and on many misfortunes so truly overwhelming that the appalling retrospect makes me wonder how I have reached this age in vigour and prosperity, through God's goodness, I have resolved to publish an account of my life; and . . . I must, in commencing my narrative, satisfy the public on some few points to which its curiosity is usually directed; the first of which is to ascertain whether a man is descended from a virtuous and ancient family. . . . I shall therefore now proceed to inform the reader how it pleased God that I should come into the world.

So you read on page 1; what you read on page 191 is this:

Just after sunset, about eight o'clock, as this musqueteer stood at his door with his sword in his hand, when he had done supper, I with great address came close up to him with a long dagger, and gave him a violent back-handed stroke, which I aimed at his neck. He instantly turned round, and the blow, falling directly upon his left shoulder, broke the whole bone of it; upon which he dropped his sword, quite overcome by the pain, and took to his heels. I pursued, and in four steps came up with him, when, raising the dagger over his head, which he lowered down, I hit him exactly upon the nape of the neck. The weapon penetrated so deep that, though I made a great effort to recover it again, I found it impossible.

So much for murder. Now for manslaughter, or rather Cellini's notion of manslaughter.

Pompeo entered an apothecary's shop at the corner of the Chiavica, about some business, and stayed there for some time. I was told he had boasted of having bullied me, but it turned out a fatal adventure to him. Just as I arrived at that quarter he was coming out of the shop, and his bravoes, having made an opening, formed a circle round him. I thereupon clapped my hand to a sharp dagger, and having forced my way through the file of ruffians, laid hold of him by the throat, so quickly and with such presence of mind, that there was not one of his friends could defend him. I pulled him towards me to give him a blow in front, but he turned his face about through excess of terror, so that I wounded him exactly under the ear; and upon repeating my blow he fell down dead. It had never been my intention to kill him, but blows are not always under command.

We must all feel that it would never have done to have begun with these passages, but long before the 191st page has been reached Cellini has retreated into his own atmosphere, and the scales of Justice have been hopelessly tampered with.

That such a man as this encountered suffering in the course of his life should be matter for satisfaction to every well-regulated mind; but, somehow or another, you find yourself pitying the fellow as he narrates the hardships he endured in the Castle of S. Angelo. He is so symmetrical a rascal! Just hear him! listen to what he says well on in the second volume, after the little incidents already quoted:

Having at length recovered my strength and vigour, after I had composed myself and resumed my cheerfulness of mind, I continued to read my Bible, and so accustomed my eyes to that darkness, that though I was at first able to read only an hour and a half, I could at length read three hours. I then reflected on the wonderful power of the Almighty upon the hearts of simple men, who had

carried their enthusiasm so far as to believe firmly that God would indulge them in all they wished for; and I promised myself the assistance of the Most High, as well through His mercy as on account of my innocence. Thus turning constantly to the Supreme Being, sometimes in prayer, sometimes in silent meditation on the divine goodness, I was totally engrossed by these heavenly reflections, and came to take such delight in pious meditations that I no longer thought of past misfortunes. On the contrary, I was all day long singing psalms and many other compositions of mine, in which I celebrated and praised the Deity.

Thus torn from their context, these passages may seem to supply the best possible falsification of the previous statement that Cellini told the truth about himself. Judged by these passages alone, he may appear a hypocrite of an unusually odious description. But it is only necessary to read his book to dispel that notion. He tells lies about other people; he repeats long conversations, sounding his own praises, during which, as his own narrative shows, he was not present; he exaggerates his own exploits, his sufferings—even, it may be, his crimes; but when we lay down his book, we feel we are saying good-bye to a man whom we know.

He has introduced himself to us, and though doubtless we prefer saints to sinners, we may be forgiven for liking the company of a live rogue better than that of the lay-figures and empty clock-cases labelled with distinguished names, who are to be found doing duty for men in the works of our standard historians. What would we not give to know Julius Cæsar one half as well as we know this outrageous rascal? The saints of the earth, too, how shadowy they are! Which of them do we really know? Excepting one or two ancient and modern Quietists, there is hardly one amongst the

whole number who being dead yet speaketh. Their memoirs far too often only reveal to us a hazy something, certainly not recognisable as a man. This is generally the fault of their editors, who, though men themselves, confine their editorial duties to going up and down the diaries and papers of the departed saint, and obliterating all human touches. This they do for the "better prevention of scandals"; and one cannot deny that they attain their end, though they pay dearly for it.

I shall never forget the start I gave when, on reading some old book about India, I came across an after-dinner jest of Henry Martyn's. The thought of Henry Martyn laughing over the walnuts and the wine was almost, as Robert Browning's unknown painter says, "too wildly dear"; and to this day I cannot help thinking that there must be a mistake somewhere.

To return to Cellini, and to conclude. On laying down his *Memoirs*, let us be careful to recall our banished moral sense, and make peace with her, by passing a final judgment on this desperate sinner, which perhaps, after all, we cannot do better than by employing language of his own concerning a monk, a fellow-prisoner of his, who never, so far as appears, murdered anybody, but of whom Cellini none the less felt himself entitled to say:

> I admired his shining qualities, but his odious vices I freely censured and held in abhorrence.

BOOK-BUYING

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL: *Essays and Addresses*

THE most distinguished of living Englishmen, who, great as he is in many directions, is perhaps inherently more a man of letters than anything else, has been overheard mournfully to declare that there were more booksellers' shops in his native town sixty years ago when he was a boy in it, than are to-day to be found within its boundaries. And yet the place, "all unabashed," now boasts its bookless self a city!

Mr. Gladstone was, of course, referring to second-hand bookshops. Neither he nor any other sensible man puts himself out about new books. When a new book is published, read an old one, was the advice of a sound though surly critic. It is one of the boasts of letters to have glorified the term "second-hand," which other crafts have "soiled to all ignoble use." But why it has been able to do this is obvious. All the best books are necessarily second-hand. The writers of to-day need not grumble. Let them "bide a wee." If their books are worth anything they too one day will be second-hand. If their books are not worth anything there are ancient trades still in full operation amongst us—the pastrycooks and the trunkmakers—who must have paper.

But is there any substance in the plaint that nobody now buys books, meaning thereby second-hand books? The late Mark Pattison, who had 16,000 volumes, and whose lightest word has therefore weight, once stated

that he had been informed, and verily believed, that there were men of his own University of Oxford who, being in uncontrolled possession of annual incomes of not less than £500, thought they were doing the thing handsomely if they expended £50 a year upon their libraries. But we are not bound to believe this unless we like. There was a touch of morosity about the late Rector of Lincoln which led him to take gloomy views of men, particularly Oxford men.

No doubt arguments *à priori* may readily be found to support the contention that the habit of book-buying is on the decline. I confess to knowing one or two men, not Oxford men either, but Cambridge men (and the passion of Cambridge for literature is a byword), who, on the plea of being pressed with business, or because they were going to a funeral, have passed a bookshop in a strange town without so much as stepping inside "just to see whether the fellow had anything." But painful as facts of this sort necessarily are, any damaging inference we might feel disposed to draw from them is dispelled by a comparison of price-lists. Compare a bookseller's catalogue of 1862 with one of the present year, and your pessimism is washed away by the tears which unrestrainedly flow as you see what *bonnes fortunes* you have lost. A young book-buyer might well turn out upon Primrose Hill and bemoan his youth after comparing old catalogues with new.

Nothing but American competition, grumble some old stagers.

Well! why not? This new battle for the books is a free fight, not a private one, and Columbia has "joined in." Lower prices are not to be looked for. The book-buyer of 1900 will be glad to buy at to-day's prices. I take pleasure in thinking he will not be able

to do so. Good finds grow scarcer and scarcer. True it is that but a few short weeks ago I picked up (such is the happy phrase, most apt to describe what was indeed a "street casualty") a copy of the original edition of *Endymion* (Keats' poem—O subscriber to Mudie's!—not Lord Beaconsfield's novel) for the easy equivalent of half-a-crown—but then that was one of my lucky days. The enormous increase of booksellers' catalogues and their wide circulation amongst the trade has already produced a hateful uniformity of prices. Go where you will it is all the same to the odd sixpence. Time was when you could map out the country for yourself with some hopefulness of plunder. There were districts where the Elizabethan dramatists were but slenderly protected. A raid into the "bonnie North Countrie" sent you home again cheered with chap-books and weighted with old pamphlets of curious interest; whilst the West of England seldom failed to yield a crop of novels. I remember getting a complete set of the Brontë books in the original issues at Torquay, I may say, for nothing. Those days are over. Your country bookseller is, in fact, more likely, such tales does he hear of London auctions, and such catalogues does he receive by every post, to exaggerate the value of his wares than to part with them pleasantly, and as a country bookseller should, "just to clear my shelves, you know, and give me a bit of room." The only compensation for this is the catalogues themselves. You get them, at least, for nothing, and it cannot be denied that they make mighty pretty reading.

These high prices tell their own tale, and force upon us the conviction that there never were so many private libraries in course of growth as there are to-day.

Libraries are not made; they grow. Your first two thousand volumes present no difficulty, and cost astonishingly little money. Given £400 and five years, and an ordinary man can in the ordinary course, without undue haste or putting any pressure upon his taste, surround himself with this number of books, all in his own language, and thenceforward have at least one place in the world in which it is possible to be happy. But pride is still out of the question. To be proud of having two thousand books would be absurd. You might as well be proud of having two top-coats. After your first two thousand difficulty begins, but until you have ten thousand volumes the less you say about your library the better. *Then* you may begin to speak.

It is no doubt a pleasant thing to have a library left you. The present writer will disclaim no such legacy, but hereby undertakes to accept it, however dusty. But, good as it is to inherit a library, it is better to collect one. Each volume then, however lightly a stranger's eye may roam from shelf to shelf, has its own individuality, a history of its own. You remember where you got it, and how much you gave for it; and your word may safely be taken for the first of these facts, but not for the second.

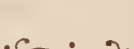
The man who has a library of his own collection is able to contemplate himself objectively, and is justified in believing in his own existence. No other man but he would have made precisely such a combination as his. Had he been in any single respect different from what he is, his library, as it exists, never would have existed. Therefore, surely he may exclaim, as in the gloaming he contemplates the backs of his loved ones, "They are mine, and I am theirs."

But the eternal note of sadness will find its way even

through the keyhole of a library. You turn some familiar page, of Shakespeare it may be, and his "infinite variety," his "multitudinous mind," suggests some new thought, and as you are wondering over it, you think of Lycidas, your friend, and promise yourself the pleasure of having his opinion of your discovery the very next time when by the fire you two "help waste a sullen day." Or it is, perhaps, some quainter, tenderer fancy that engages your solitary attention, something in Sir Philip Sidney or Henry Vaughan, and then you turn to look for Phyllis, ever the best interpreter of love, human or divine. Alas! the printed page grows hazy beneath a filmy eye as you suddenly remember that Lycidas is dead—"dead ere his prime," —and that the pale cheek of Phyllis will never again be relumined by the white light of her pure enthusiasm. And then you fall to thinking of the inevitable, and perhaps, in your present mood, not unwelcome hour, when the "ancient peace" of your old friends will be disturbed, when rude hands will dislodge them from their accustomed nooks and break up their goodly company.

> Death bursts amongst them like a shell,
> And strews them over half the town.

They will form new combinations, lighten other men's toil, and soothe another's sorrow. Fool that I was to call anything *mine*!



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

JAMES BRYCE: Introduction to *Speeches and Letters of Abraham Lincoln*, 1832–1865

No man since Washington has become to Americans so familiar or so beloved a figure as Abraham Lincoln. He is to them the representative and typical American, the man who best embodies the political ideals of the nation. He is typical in the fact that he sprang from the masses of the people, that he remained through his whole career a man of the people, that his chief desire was to be in accord with the beliefs and wishes of the people, that he never failed to trust in the people and to rely on their support. Every native American knows his life and his speeches. His anecdotes and witticisms have passed into the thought and the conversation of the whole nation as those of no other statesman have done.

He belongs, however, not only to the United States, but to the whole of civilised mankind. It is no exaggeration to say that he has, within the last thirty years, grown to be a conspicuous figure in the history of the modern world. Without him, the course of events, not only in the western hemisphere but in Europe also, would have been different, for he was called to guide at the greatest crisis of its fate a State already mighty, and now far more mighty than in his days, and the guidance he gave has affected the march of events ever since. A life and a character such as his ought to be known to and comprehended by Europeans as well as

by Americans. Among Europeans, it is especially Englishmen who ought to appreciate him and understand the significance of his life, for he came of an English stock, he spoke the English tongue, his action told upon the progress of events and the shaping of opinion in all British communities everywhere more than it has done upon any other nation outside America itself.

This collection of Lincoln's speeches seeks to make him known by his words as readers of history know him by his deeds. In popularly-governed countries the great statesman is almost of necessity an orator, though his eminence as a speaker may be no true measure either of his momentary power or of his permanent fame, for wisdom, courage and tact bear little direct relation to the gift for speech. But whether that gift be present in greater or in lesser degree, the character and ideas of a statesman are best studied through his own words. This is particularly true of Lincoln, because he was not what may be called a professional orator. There have been famous orators whose speeches we may read for the beauty of their language or for the wealth of ideas they contain, with comparatively little regard to the circumstances of time and place that led to their being delivered. Lincoln is not one of these. His speeches need to be studied in close relation to the occasions which called them forth. They are not philosophical lucubrations or brilliant displays of rhetoric. They are a part of his life. They are the expression of his convictions, and derive no small part of their weight and dignity from the fact that they deal with grave and urgent questions, and express the spirit in which he approached those questions. Few great characters stand out so clearly revealed by their words, whether spoken or written, as he does.

Accordingly Lincoln's discourses are not like those of nearly all the men whose eloquence has won them fame. When we think of such men as Pericles, Demosthenes, Æschines, Cicero, Hortensius, Burke, Sheridan, Erskine, Canning, Webster, Gladstone, Bright, Massillon, Vergniaud, Castelar, we think of exuberance of ideas or of phrases, of a command of appropriate similes or metaphors, of the gifts of invention and of exposition, of imaginative flights, or outbursts of passion fit to stir and rouse an audience to like passion. We think of the orator as gifted with a powerful or finely-modulated voice, an imposing presence, a graceful delivery. Or if — remembering that Lincoln was by profession a lawyer and practised until he became President of the United States—we think of the special gifts which mark the forensic orator, we should expect to find a man full of ingenuity and subtlety, one dexterous in handling his case in such wise as to please and capture the judge or the jury whom he addresses, one skilled in those rhetorical devices and strokes of art which can be used, when need be, to engage the listener's feelings and distract his mind from the real merits of the issue.

Of all this kind of talent there was in Lincoln but little. He was not an artful pleader; indeed, it was said of him that he could argue well only those cases in the justice of which he personally believed, and was unable to make the worse appear the better reason. For most of the qualities which the world admires in Cicero or in Burke we should look in vain in Lincoln's speeches. They are not fine pieces of exquisite diction, fit to be declaimed as school exercises or set before students as models of composition.

What, then, are their merits? and why do they deserve to be valued and remembered? How comes it that a

man of first-rate powers was deficient in qualities appertaining to his own profession which men less remarkable have possessed?

To answer this question, let us first ask what were the preparation and training Abraham Lincoln had for oratory, whether political or forensic.

Born in rude and abject poverty, he had never any education, except what he gave himself, till he was approaching manhood. Not even books wherewith to inform and train his mind were within his reach. No school, no university, no legal faculty had any part in training his powers. When he became a lawyer and a politician, the years most favourable to continuous study had already passed, and the opportunities he found for reading were very scanty. He knew but few authors in general literature, though he knew those few thoroughly. He taught himself a little mathematics, but he could read no language save his own, and can have had only the faintest acquaintance with European history or with any branch of philosophy.

The want of regular education was not made up for by the persons among whom his lot was cast. Till he was a grown man, he never moved in any society from which he could learn those things with which the mind of an orator or a statesman ought to be stored. Even after he had gained some legal practice, there was for many years no one for him to mix with except the petty practitioners of a petty town, men nearly all of whom knew little more than he did himself.

Schools gave him nothing, and society gave him nothing. But he had a powerful intellect and a resolute will. Isolation fostered not only self-reliance but the habit of reflection, and, indeed, of prolonged and intense reflection. He made all that he knew a part of himself.

He thought everything out for himself. His convictions were his own—clear and coherent. He was not positive or opinionated, and he did not deny that at certain moments he pondered and hesitated long before he decided on his course. But though he could keep a policy in suspense, waiting for events to guide him, he did not waver. He paused and reconsidered, but it was never his way either to go back upon a decision once made, or to waste time in vain regrets that all he expected had not been attained. He took advice readily, and left many things to his ministers; but he did not lean upon his advisers. Without vanity or ostentation, he was always independent, self-contained, prepared to take full responsibility for his acts.

That he was keenly observant of all that passed under his eyes, that his mind played freely round everything it touched, we know from the accounts of his talk, which first made him famous in the town and neighbourhood where he lived. His humour, and his memory for anecdotes which he could bring out to good purpose at the right moment, are qualities which Europe deems distinctively American, but no great man of action in the nineteenth century, even in America, possessed them in the same measure. Seldom has so acute a power of observation been found united to so abundant a power of sympathy.

These remarks may seem to belong to a study of his character rather than of his speeches, yet they are not irrelevant, because the interest of his speeches lies in their revelation of his character. Let us, however, return to the speeches and to the letters, some of which, given in this volume, are scarcely less noteworthy than are the speeches.

What are the distinctive merits of these speeches and

letters? There is less humour in them than his reputation as a humorist would have led us to expect. They are serious, grave, practical. We feel that the man does not care to play over the surface of the subject, or to use it as a way of displaying his cleverness. He is trying to get right down to the very foundation of the matter and tell us what his real thoughts about it are. In this respect he sometimes reminds us of Bismarck's speeches, which, in their rude, broken, forth-darting way, always go straight to their destined aim; always hit the nail on the head. So too, in their effort to grapple with fundamental facts, Lincoln's bear a sort of likeness to Cromwell's speeches, though Cromwell has far less power of utterance, and always seems to be wrestling with the difficulty of finding language to convey to others what is plain, true and weighty to himself. This difficulty makes the great Protector, though we can usually see what he is driving at, frequently confused and obscure. Lincoln, however, is always clear. Simplicity, directness and breadth are the notes of his thought. Aptness, clearness, and again simplicity, are the notes of his diction. The American speakers of his generation, like most of those of the preceding generation, but unlike those of that earlier generation to which Alexander Hamilton, John Adams, Marshall and Maddison belonged, were generally infected by a floridity which made them a byword in Europe. Even men of brilliant talent, such as Edward Everett, were by no means free from this straining after effect by highly-coloured phrases and theatrical effects. Such faults have to-day virtually vanished from the United States, largely from a change in public taste, to which perhaps the example set by Lincoln himself may have contributed. In the forties and fifties florid rhetoric

was rampant, especially in the West and South, where taste was less polished than in the older States. That Lincoln escaped it is a striking mark of his independence as well as of his greatness. There is no superfluous ornament in his orations, nothing tawdry, nothing otiose. For the most part, he addresses the reason of his hearers, and credits them with desiring to have none but solid arguments laid before them. When he does appeal to emotion, he does it quietly, perhaps even solemnly. The note struck is always a high note. The impressiveness of the appeal comes not from fervid vehemence of language, but from the sincerity of his own convictions. Sometimes one can see that through its whole course the argument is suffused by the speaker's feeling, and when the time comes for the feeling to be directly expressed, it glows not with fitful flashes, but with the steady heat of an intense and strenuous soul.

The impression which most of the speeches leave on the reader is that their matter has been carefully thought over even when the words have not been learnt by heart. But there is an anecdote that on one occasion, early in his career, Lincoln went to a public meeting not in the least intending to speak, but presently being called for by the audience, rose in obedience to the call, and delivered a long address so ardent and thrilling that the reporters dropped their pencils and, absorbed in watching him, forgot to take down what he said. It has also been stated, on good authority, that on his way in the railroad cars to the dedication of the monument on the field of Gettysburg, he turned to a Pennsylvanian gentleman who was sitting beside him and remarked, "I suppose I shall be expected to say something this afternoon; lend me a pencil and a bit of paper," and that he thereupon jotted down the notes

of a speech which has become the best known and best remembered of all his utterances, so that some of its words and sentences have passed into the minds of all educated men everywhere.

That famous Gettysburg speech is the best example one could desire of the characteristic quality of Lincoln's eloquence. It is a short speech. It is wonderfully terse in expression. It is quiet, so quiet that at the moment it did not make upon the audience, an audience wrought up by a long and highly-decorated harangue from one of the prominent orators of the day, an impression at all commensurate to that which it began to make as soon as it was read over America and Europe. There is in it not a touch of what we call rhetoric, or of any striving after effect. Alike in thought and in language it is simple, plain, direct. But it states certain truths and principles in phrases so aptly chosen and so forcible, that one feels as if those truths could have been conveyed in no other words, and as if this deliverance of them were made for all time. Words so simple and so strong could have come only from one who had meditated so long upon the primal facts of American history and popular government that the truths those facts taught him had become like the truths of mathematics in their clearness, their breadth, and their precision.

The speeches on Slavery read strange to us now, when slavery as a living system has been dead for forty years, dead and buried hell deep under the detestation of mankind. It is hard for those whose memory does not go back to 1865 to realise that down till then it was not only a terrible fact, but was defended—defended by many otherwise good men, defended not only by pseudo-scientific anthropologists as being in the order of nature, but by ministers of the Gospel, out of the

sacred Scriptures, as part of the ordinances of God. Lincoln's position, the position of one who had to induce slave-owning fellow-citizens to listen to him and admit persuasion into their heated and prejudiced minds, did not allow him to denounce it with horror, as we can all so easily do to-day. But though his language is calm and restrained, he never condescends to palter with slavery. He shows its innate evils and dangers with unanswerable force. The speech on the Dred Scott decision is a lucid, close and cogent piece of reasoning which, in its wide view of Constitutional issues, sometimes reminds one of Webster—sometimes even of Burke, though it does not equal the former in weight nor the latter in splendour of diction.

Among the letters, perhaps the most impressive is that written to Mrs. Bixley, the mother of five sons who had died fighting for the Union in the armies of the North. It is short, and it deals with a theme on which hundreds of letters are written daily. But I do not know where the nobility of self-sacrifice for a great cause, and of the consolation which the thought of a sacrifice so made should bring, is set forth with such simple and pathetic beauty. Deep must be the fountains from which there issues so pure a stream.

The career of Lincoln is often held up to ambitious young Americans as an example to show what a man may achieve by his native strength, with no advantages of birth or environment or education. In this there is nothing improper, nothing fanciful. The moral is one which may well be drawn, and in which those on whose early life Fortune has not smiled may find encouragement. But the example is, after all, no great encouragement to ordinary men, for Lincoln was an extraordinary man.

He triumphed over the adverse conditions of his early years because Nature had bestowed on him high and rare powers. Superficial observers who saw his homely aspect and plain manners, and noted that his fellow-townsmen, when asked why they so trusted him, answered that it was for his common-sense, failed to see that his common-sense was a part of his genius. What is common-sense but the power of seeing the fundamentals of any practical question, and of disengaging them from the accidental and transient features that may overlie these fundamentals—the power, to use a familiar expression, of getting down to bed-rock? One part of this power is the faculty for perceiving what the average man will think and can be induced to do. This is what keeps the superior mind in touch with the ordinary mind, and this is perhaps why the name of "common-sense" is used, because the superior mind seems in its power of comprehending others to be itself a part of the general sense of the community. All men of high practical capacity have this power. It is the first condition of success. But in men who have received a philosophical or literary education there is a tendency to embellish, for purposes of persuasion, or perhaps for their own gratification, the language in which they recommend their conclusions, or to state those conclusions in the light of large general principles, a tendency which may, unless carefully watched, carry them too high above the heads of the crowd. Lincoln, never having had such an education, spoke to the people as one of themselves. He seemed to be saying not only what each felt, but expressing the feeling just as each would have expressed it. In reality, he was quite as much above his neighbours in insight as was the polished orator or writer, but the plain directness of his language

seemed to keep him on their level. His strength lay less in the form and vesture of the thought than in the thought itself, in the large, simple, practical view which he took of the position. And thus, to repeat what has been said already, the sterling merit of these speeches of his, that which made them effective when they were delivered and makes them worth reading to-day, is to be found in the justness of his conclusions and their fitness to the circumstances of the time. When he rose into higher air, when his words were clothed with stateliness and solemnity, it was the force of his conviction and the emotion that thrilled through his utterance, that printed the words deep upon the minds and drove them home to the hearts of the people.

What is a great man? Common speech, which after all must be our guide to the sense of the terms which the world uses, gives this name to many sorts of men. How far greatness lies in the power and range of the intellect, how far in the strength of the will, how far in elevation of view and aim and purpose,—this is a question too large to be debated here. But of Abraham Lincoln it may be truly said that in his greatness all three elements were present. He had not the brilliance, either in thought or word or act, that dazzles, nor the restless activity that occasionally pushes to the front even persons with gifts not of the first order. He was a patient, thoughtful, melancholy man, whose intelligence, working sometimes slowly but always steadily and surely, was capacious enough to embrace, and vigorous enough to master, the incomparably difficult facts and problems he was called to deal with. His executive talent showed itself not in sudden and startling strokes, but in the calm serenity with which he formed his judgments and laid his plans, in the

undismayed firmness with which he adhered to them in the face of popular clamour, of conflicting counsels from his advisers, sometimes, even, of what others deemed all but hopeless failure. These were the qualities needed in one who had to pilot the Republic through the heaviest storm that had ever broken upon it. But the mainspring of his power, and the truest evidence of his greatness, lay in the nobility of his aims, in the fervour of his conviction, in the stainless rectitude which guided his action and won for him the confidence of the people. Without these things neither the vigour of his intellect nor the firmness of his will could have availed.

There is a vulgar saying that all great men are unscrupulous. Of him it may rather be said that the note of greatness we feel in his thinking and his speech and his conduct had its source in the loftiness and purity of his character. Lincoln's is one of the careers that refute this imputation on human nature.

MATTHEW ARNOLD'S ESSAYS

G. K. CHESTERTON: Introduction to *Matthew Arnold's Essays*

OUR actual obligations to Matthew Arnold are almost beyond expression. His very faults reformed us. The chief of his services may perhaps be stated thus, that he discovered (for the modern English) the purely intellectual importance of humility. He had none of that hot humility which is the fascination of saints and good men. But he had a cold humility which he had discovered to be a mere essential of the intelligence. To see things clearly, he said, you must "get yourself out of the way." The weakness of pride lies after all in this: that oneself is a window. It can be a coloured window, if you will; but the more thickly you lay on the colours the less of a window it will be. The two things to be done with a window are to wash it and then forget it. So the truly pious have always said the two things to do personally are to cleanse and to forget oneself.

Matthew Arnold found the window of the English soul opaque with its own purple. The Englishman had painted his own image on the pane so gorgeously that it was practically a dead panel; it had no opening on the world without. He could not see the most obvious and enormous objects outside his own door. The Englishman could not see (for instance) that the French Revolution was a far-reaching, fundamental and most

practical and successful change in the whole structure of Europe. He really thought that it was a bloody and futile episode, in weak imitation of an English General Election. The Englishman could not see that the Catholic Church was (at the very least) an immense and enduring Latin civilisation, linking us to the lost civilisations of the Mediterranean. He really thought it was a sort of sect. The Englishman could not see that the Franco-Prussian war was the entrance of a new and menacing military age, a terror to England and to all. He really thought it was a little lesson to Louis Napoleon for not reading the *Times*. The most enormous catastrophe was only some kind of symbolic compliment to England. If the sun fell from Heaven it only showed how wise England was in not having much sunshine. If the waters were turned to blood it was only an advertisement for Bass's Ale or Fry's Cocoa. Such was the weak pride of the English then. One cannot say that is wholly undiscoverable now.

But Arnold made war on it. One excellent point which he made in many places was to this effect: that those very foreign tributes to England which Englishmen quoted as showing their own merit were examples of the particular foreign merit which we did not share. Frenchmen bragged about France and Germans about Germany, doubtless; but they retained just enough of an impartial interest in the mere truth itself to remark upon the more outstanding and obvious of the superiorities of England. Arnold justly complained that when a Frenchman wrote about English political liberty we always thought it a tribute simply to English political liberty. We never thought of it as a tribute to French philosophical liberty. Examples of this are still relevant. A Frenchman wrote some time ago a book

called *A quoi tient la superiorité des Anglo-Saxons?* What Englishman dare write a book called "What causes the Superiority of Frenchmen"? But this lucid abnegation is a power. When a Frenchman calls a book "What is the Superiority of Englishmen?" we ought to point to that book and say: "This is the superiority of Frenchmen."

This humility, as I say, was with Arnold a mental need. He was not naturally a humble man; he might even be called a supercilious one. But he was driven to preaching humility merely as a thing to clear the head. He found the virtue which was just then being flung in the mire as fit only for nuns and slaves: and he saw that it was essential to philosophers. The most unpractical merit of ancient piety became the most practical merit of modern investigation. I repeat, he did not understand that headlong and happy humility which belongs to the more beautiful souls of the simpler ages. He did not appreciate the force (nor perhaps the humour) of St. Francis of Assisi when he called his own body "my brother the donkey." That is to say, he did not realise a certain feeling deep in all mystics in the face of the dual destiny. He did not realise their feeling (full both of fear and laughter) that the body *is* an animal and a very comic animal. Matthew Arnold could never have felt any part of himself to be purely comic—not even his singular whiskers. He would never, like Father Juniper, have "played see-saw to abase himself." In a word, he had little sympathy with the old ecstasies of self-effacement. But for this very reason it is all the more important that his main work was an attempt to preach some kind of self-effacement even to his own self-assertive age. He realised that the saints had even understated the case for humility.

They had always said that without humility we should never see the better world to come. He realised that without humility we could not even see this world.

Nevertheless, as I have said, a certain tincture of pride was natural to him, and prevented him from appreciating some things of great human value. It prevented him for instance from having an adequate degree of popular sympathy. He had (what is so rare in England) the sense of the state as one thing, consisting of all its citizens, the Senatus Populusque Romanus. But he had not the feeling of familiarity with the loves and hungers of the common man, which is the essence of the egalitarian sentiment. He was a republican, but he was not a democrat. He contemptuously dismissed the wage-earning, beer-drinking, ordinary labourers of England as "merely populace." They are not populace; they are merely mankind. If you do not like them you do not like mankind. And when all the *rôle* of Arnold's real glories has been told, there always does remain a kind of hovering doubt as to whether he did like mankind.

But of course the key of Arnold's in most matters is that he deliberately conceived himself to be a corrective. He prided himself not upon telling the truth but upon telling the unpopular half-truth. He blamed his contemporaries, Carlyle for instance, not for telling falsehoods, but simply for telling popular truths. And certainly in the case of Carlyle and others he was more or less right. Carlyle professed to be a Jeremiah and even a misanthrope. But he was really a demagogue and, in one sense, even a flatterer. He was entirely sincere as all good demagogues are; he merely shared all the peculiar vanities and many of the peculiar illusions of the people to whom he spoke. He told Englishmen that they

were Teutons, that they were Vikings, that they were practical politicians—all the things they like to be told they are, all the things that they are not. He told them, indeed, with a dark reproachfulness, that their strengths were lying neglected or inert. Still he reminded them of their strengths; and they liked him. But they did not like Arnold, who placidly reminded them of their weaknesses.

Arnold suffered, however, from thus consenting merely to correct; from thus consenting to tell the half-truth that was neglected. He reached at times a fanaticism that was all the more extraordinary because it was a fanaticism of moderation, an intemperance of temperance. This may be seen, I think, in the admirable argument for classical supremacy to which so much of this selection is devoted. He saw and very rightly asserted that the fault of the Mid-Victorian English was that they did not seem to have any sense of definite excellence. Nothing could be better than the way in which he points out in the very important essay on "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" that the French admit into intellectual problems the same principle of clearly stated and generally admitted dogmas which all of us in our daily lives admit into moral problems. The French, as he puts it in a good summarising phrase, have a conscience in literary matters. Upon the opposite English evil he poured perpetual satire. That any man who had money enough to start a paper could start a paper and say it was as good as the *Athenæum*; that anyone who had money enough to run a school could run a school and say it was as good as Winchester; these marks of the English anarchy he continually denounced. But he hardly sufficiently noticed that if this English extreme of a vulgar and indiscriminate

acceptance be most certainly an extreme and something of a madness, it is equally true that his own celebration of excellence when carried past a certain point might become a very considerable madness also; indeed has become such a madness in some of the artistic epochs of the world. It is true that a man is in some danger of becoming a lunatic if he builds a stucco house and says it is as fine as the Parthenon. But surely a man is equally near to a lunatic if he refuses to live in any house except the Parthenon. A frantic hunger for all kinds of inappropriate food may be a mark of a lunatic; but it is also the mark of a lunatic to be fastidious about food.

One of the immense benefits conferred on us by Matthew Arnold lay in the fact that he recalled to us the vital fact that we are Europeans. He had a consciousness of Europe much fuller and firmer than that of any of the great men of his epoch. For instance, he admired the Germans as Carlyle admired the Germans; perhaps he admired the Germans too much as Carlyle admired the Germans too much. But he was not deluded by any separatist follies about the superiority of a Teutonic race. If he admired the Germans it was for being European, signally and splendidly European. He did not, like Carlyle, admire the Germans for being German. Like Carlyle he relied much on the sagacity of Goethe. But the sagacity of Goethe upon which he relied was not a rugged or cloudy sagacity, the German element in Goethe. It was the Greek element in Goethe; a lucid and equalised sagacity, a moderation and a calm such as Carlyle could not have admired, nay, could not even have imagined. Arnold did indeed wish, as every sane European wishes, that the nations that make up Europe should continue to be individual;

that the contributions from the nations should be national. But he did wish that the contributions should be contributions, parts, that is, of a common cause and unity, the cause and unity of European civilisation. He desired that Germany should be great, so as to make Europe great. He would not have desired that Germany should grow great so as to make Europe small. Anything, however big and formidable, which tended to divide us from the common culture of our continent he would have regarded as a crotchet. Puritanism he regarded at bottom as only an enormous crotchet. The Anglo-Saxon race most certainly he would have regarded as an enormous crotchet.

In this respect it is curious to notice how English public opinion has within our own time contrived to swing from one position to the contrary position without her touching that central position which Arnold loved. He found the English people in a mood which seemed to him unreal and un-European, but this mood was one of smug Radical mediocrity, contemptuous of arts and aims of high policy and of national honour. Ten years after his death the English people were waving Union Jacks and shouting for "La Revanche." Yet though they had passed thus rapidly from extreme anti-militarism to extreme militarism they had never touched on the truth that Arnold had to tell. Whether as anti-militarists or as militarists, they were alike ignorant of the actualities of our Aryan civilisation. They have passed from tameness to violence without touching strength. Whenever they really touch strength they will (with their wonderful English strength) do a number of things. One of the things may be to save the world. Another of the things will certainly be to thank Matthew Arnold.

IN THE READING ROOM

JAMES DOUGLAS: *Adventures in London.*

YOUR cockney likes noise. I am sure he would go mad if there were silence in London for the space of half-an-hour. He would feel that the foundations of the earth had given way, and that the bottom of the universe had dropped out.

Have you observed that a sudden silence produces the sensation of falling through space? Thus Satan must have felt during those nine days while he was executing the finest backfall ever seen on any stage. It is now, unhappily, impossible to arrange for a nine days' drop, but you can procure the equivalent silence. Therefore, I prescribe for all sound-wounded persons a sojourn in the Reading Room.

In that noiseless mausoleum they may enjoy a perfect rest cure without money and without price. It is a securer retreat than any sanitarium. Its cloistral peace is more impermeable than any club. The Athenæum compared to it is a gabble-den, and White's a choral hell. It is a more inviolate sanctuary than a Trappist Monastery. It is serener than the crypt of St. Paul's.

Its inmates live in a vow of silence. It is a crime even to whisper and a sin to sigh. The orchestral cough that ravages the church and the theatre here is hushed, and your ears are not lacerated by the rustle of newspapers and the crackle of silken skirts. The

human voice is not heard under this crystal dome. Here the pen is wool-shod and the nose seldom becomes a trumpet on which fiends blow soul-desolating strains. A fig for your nursing-homes! Give me the Reading Room Cure!

But noise is not the only plague from which the Reading Room provides a means of escape. It is a sure refuge against fresh air. London is a city of draughts. Its houses are caves of Boreas. Its theatres are conclaves of the four winds. Its churches are swept by icy gales. Its " Tubes " are fit only for men of stone. Through them rush a perpetual tornado, a continuous typhoon. To travel in them is like being a pea in a pea-shooter. You are blown to your destination. The pier at Brighton is stuffy compared to these subterranean resorts. The bitter blast congeals you at all angles. It hacks and hews your shivering body like the Maiden, that mediæval instrument of torture which clasped the victim with enveloping knives, cutting him into little pieces before he could gasp. To such a pass has the insane passion for fresh air brought us.

But, thank heaven! there is one place in London where there is no fresh air. Thank heaven for the nobly conservative Trustees of the British Museum. They have kept the Reading Room free from the pestilence that is making London unfit to live in. Thanks to their stern conservative principles, one can be as cosy as a mummy in an airtight sarcophagus, as comfortable as a corpse in a healthy old vault. Why should the dead monopolise all the privileges? It puts a premium upon suicide, for the thought of the draughtless coffin makes one fall in love with snug and airless death. It is as well that the Reading Room helps us to endure

the windy world. No fault can be found with the foulness of the air. It is richly laden with those germs of which science desires to rob us. I love bacteria, and microbes are my closest friends. I abhor the lonely solitude of a sanitary atmosphere. It would be as bleak as the ether. Filtered air and filtered water are both abominable. For me the full-bodied vintage of the Thames, the fruity nectar of the Lea, and the germ-congested air of the Reading Room.

Of late I see with boding terror dim signs of revolution in the Reading Room. The hoof of reform is vaguely seen in the sallow light I love. Leather tags have been attached to the back of the sedate volumes of the vastest catalogue in the world. A gross indignity! I blush when I pull out a volume as if I were pulling on a boot. And there is a villainous air of newness about the whole place. Some fierce charwoman has lately been let loose. The old pens and the ink bottles have been swept away from the catalogue desks, and no longer can they rest lovingly upon the splashes and splotches of ink. A horrible tidiness infests the Reading Room. The slips on which you write your application are no longer strewn on the desks. They are kept, like the lodgment forms in a bank, in bilious oak boxes.

I know how this ferocious charwoman will end. She will let in the fresh air. She will evict my beloved microbes. Already I hear the pneumatic tubes that will hurl books at your heads like bricks the moment you ask for them. All the dear delays, the fond procrastinations, the dignified circumlocutions will be rudely abolished. The large indolence of our beehive will be destroyed. We shall be compelled to hustle like the Chicago frog. You know the story. A Boston frog

and a Chicago frog fell into a basin of cream. The Boston frog resigned himself to a lingering death. The Chicago frog bade him hustle. He declined to hustle. The Chicago frog hustled, and in the morning they found the Chicago frog dead, and the Boston frog sitting on a pat of butter. Now, I will hustle outside the Reading Room, but not in it. Therefore, let the charwoman pause, for many valueless lives will be lost if she blights us with fresh air and pneumonia.

I like to figure the Reading Room as the Labyrinth of Literature. In it weird men and weird women wander, each following a separate lure. Its geometrical aisles and alleys exhale an ironic symbolism. In the central circle sit the minions of the Minotaur who feed on human ambition. Round them in concentric eddies are the catalogue desks. The letters of the alphabet preside over the silent session of clues. It is a long walk from A to Z. I often make a mental obeisance to the Roman alphabet whose twenty-six potentates loom here like gods. Consider their empire. Out of their permutations and combinations are made the millions of books that line those walls and all the invisible galleries and catacombs behind them. Almighty alphabet! Yet, I, man, invented it casually in my leisure hours. Am I not wonderful?

Behold me, in various guises, sitting at my numbered desk. Rows on rows of me, hunched in all sorts of attitudes, garbed in all kinds of clothes, absorbed in all varieties of industry, bees in the biggest beehive on earth. Here my bald head glows like ivory under the beams of the electric lamp. There I am a dreaming girl, my warm youth and fresh grace mocking the printed dead. Now I am a grizzled grandmother, spectacled, wrinkled, rheumy-eyed. Now I am a

serious boy with smooth cheek and careless curls. Are these shadows real? They glide languidly to and fro like the drowsy fish that moon behind the muddy glass of an aquarium. They are inhumanly unaware of each other. They are unconscious of each other's absurdity.

The Reading Room is rich in eccentric characters, mostly parasites. I have seen Micawber there and Dick Swiveller, Mr. Dick and Sylvestre Bonnard. Many of these strange beings are slaves of habit. They sit on the same seat day after day, year after year. Samuel Butler once complained bitterly because he could not get Frost's *Lives of the Early Christians*. He had been wont to lay his papers on it, and its loss paralysed him. Many of those barnacles would die if they were dislodged. They are adhesive habits. Rarely do you see famous men in this sepulchre. It is the haunt of dry-as-dusts, hacks, compilers, and vampers. Yet it is a pathetic tomb. If we could catalogue the hopes and despairs that have come and gone through those ever-swinging doors we should have a microcosm of life, a dusty sunbeam peopled with those motes of irony, the ghosts of the living and the phantoms of the dead.

ON BOSWELL AND HIS MIRACLE

A. G. GARDINER: *Pebbles on the Shore*

As I passed along Great Queen Street the other evening I saw that Boswell's house, so long threatened, is at last falling a victim to the house-breaker. The fact is one of the by-products of the war. While the Huns are abroad in Belgium the Vandals are busy at home. You may see them at work on every hand. The few precious remains we have of the past are vanishing like snows before the south wind.

In the Strand there is a great heap of rubbish where, when the war began, stood two fine old houses of Charles II.'s London. Their disappearance would, in normal times, have set all the Press in revolt. But they have gone without a murmur, so preoccupied are we with more urgent matters. And so with the Elizabethan houses in Cloth Fair. They have been demolished without a word of protest. And what devastation is afoot in Lincoln's Inn among those fine reposeful dwellings, hardly one of which is without some historic or literary interest!

In the midst of all this vandalism it was too much perhaps to hope that Boswell's house would escape. Bozzy was not an Englishman; his residence in London was casual, and, what is more to the point, he has only a reflected greatness. Macaulay's judgment of him is now felt to be too harsh, but even his warmest advocate must admit that his picture of himself is not engaging. He was gross in his habits, full of little malevolences

(observe the spitefulness of his references to Goldsmith), and his worship of Johnson was abject to the point of nausea.

He made himself a sort of doormat for his hero, and treasured the dirt that came from the great man's heavy boots. No insult levelled at him was too outrageous to be recorded with pride. "You were drunk last night, you dog," says Johnson to him one morning during the tour in the Hebrides, and down goes the remark as if he had received the most gracious of good mornings. "Have you no better manners?" says Johnson on another occasion. "There is *your want*." And Boswell goes home and writes down the snub together with his apologies. And so when he has been expressing his emotions on hearing music. "Sir," said Johnson, "I should never hear it if it made me such a fool."

Once indeed he rebelled. It was when they were dining with a company at Sir Joshua Reynolds's. Johnson attacked him, he says, with such rudeness that he kept away from him for a week. His story of the reconciliation is one of the most delightful things in that astonishing book.

"After dinner, when Mr. Langton was called out of the room and we were by ourselves, he drew his chair near to mine and said, in a tone of conciliatory courtesy: 'Well, how have you done?' Boswell: 'Sir, you have made me very uneasy by your behaviour to me when we were last at Sir Joshua Reynolds's. You know, my dear sir, no man has a greater respect or affection for you, or would sooner go to the end of the world to serve you. Now to treat me so——' He insisted that I had interrupted him, which I assured him was not the case; and proceeded, 'But why treat me so before

people who neither love you nor me?' Johnson: 'Well, I am sorry for it: I'll make it up to you in twenty different ways, as you please.' Boswell: 'I said to-day to Sir Joshua, when he observed that you *tossed* me sometimes, I don't care how often or how high he tosses me when only friends are present, for then I fall upon soft ground; but I do not like falling upon stones, which is the case when enemies are present. I think this is a pretty good image, sir.' Johnson: 'Sir, it is one of the happiest I ever have heard.'"

Is there anything more delicious outside Falstaff and Bardolph, or Don Quixote and Sancho Panza? Indeed, Bardolph's immortal "Would I were with him wheresoe'er he be, whether in heaven or in hell," is in the very spirit of Boswell's devotion to his hero.

It was his failings as much as his talents that enabled him to work the miracle. His lack of self-respect and humour, his childish egotism, his love of gossip, his naïve bathos, and his vulgarities contributed as much to the making of his immortal book as his industry, his wonderful verbal memory, and his doglike fidelity. I have said that his greatness is only reflected. But that is hardly just. It might even be more true to say that Johnson owes his immortality to Boswell. What of him would remain to-day but for the man who took his scourgings so humbly and repaid them by licking the boot that kicked him? Who now reads *London*, or *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, or *The Rambler*? I once read *Rasselas*, and found it pompous and dull. And I have read *The Lives of the Poets*, and though they are not pompous and dull, they are often singularly poor criticism, and the essay on Milton is, in some respects, as mean a piece of work as ever came out of Grub Street.

But *The Life*! What in all the world of books is there like it? I have been reading it off and on for more than thirty years, and still find it inexhaustible. It ripens with the years. It is so intimate that it seems to be a record of my own experiences. I have dined so often with Johnson at the Mitre and Sir Joshua's and Langton's and the rest that I know him far better than the shadows I meet in daily life. I seem to have been present when he was talking to the King, and when Goldsmith sulked because he had not shared the honour; when he met Wilkes, and when he insulted Sir Joshua and for once got silenced; when he "downed" Robertson, and when, for want of a lodging, he and Savage walked all night round St. James's Square, full of high spirits and patriotism, inveighing against the Minister and resolving that "they would *stand by their country*."

And at the end of it all I feel very much like Mr. Birrell, who, when asked what he would do when the Government went out of office, replied, "I shall retire to the country, and really read Boswell." Not "finish Boswell," you observe. No one could ever finish Boswell. No one would ever want to finish Boswell. Like a sensible man he will just go on reading him and reading him, and reading him until the light fails and there is no more reading to be done.

What an achievement for this uncouth Scotch lawyer to have accomplished! He knew he had done a great thing; but even he did not know how great a thing. Had he known he might have answered as proudly as Dryden answered when some one said to him that his *Ode to St. Cecilia* was the finest that had ever been written. "Or ever will be," said the poet. Dryden's ode has been eclipsed more than once since it was written; but Boswell's book has never been approached.

It is not only the best thing of its sort in literature: there is nothing with which one can compare it.

Boswell's house is falling to dust. No matter! His memorial will last as long as the English speech is spoken and as long as men love the immortal things of which it is the vehicle.

A VOLUME OF OLD PLAYS

EDMUND GOSSE: *Gossip in a Library*

IN his *Ballad of the Book-Hunter*, Andrew Lang describes how, in breeches baggy at the knees, the bibliophile hunts in all weathers:

> No dismal stall escapes his eye;
> He turns o'er tomes of low degrees;
> There soiled romanticists may lie,
> Or Restoration comedies.

That speaks straight to my heart; for of all my weaknesses the weakest is that weakness of mine for Restoration plays. From 1660 down to 1710 nothing in dramatic form comes amiss, and I have great schemes, like the boards on which people play the game of solitaire, in which space is left for every drama needed to make this portion of my library complete. It is scarcely literature, I confess; it is a sport, a long game which I shall probably be still playing at, with three mouldy old tragedies and one opera yet needed to complete my set, when the Reaper comes to carry me where there is no amassing nor collecting. It would hardly be credited how much pleasure I have drained out of these dramas since I began to collect them judiciously in my still callow youth. I admit only first editions; but that is not so rigorous as it sounds, since at least half of the poor old things never went into a second.

As long as it is Congreve and Dryden and Otway, of course it is literature, and of a very high order; even

Shadwell and Mrs. Behn and Southerne are literature; Settle and Ravenscroft may pass as legitimate literary curiosity. But there are depths below this where there is no excuse but sheer collectaneomania. Plays by people who never got into any schedule of English letters that ever was planned, dramatic nonentities, stage innocents massacred in their cradles, if only they were published in quarto I find room for them. I am not quite so pleased to get these anonymities, I must confess, as I am to get a clean, tall *editio princeps* of *The Orphan* or of *Love for Love*. But I neither reject nor despise them; each of them counts one; each serves to fill a place on my solitaire board, each hurries on that dreadful possible time coming when my collection shall be complete, and I shall have nothing to do but break my collecting rod and bury it fathoms deep.

A volume has just come in which happens to have nothing in it but those forgotten plays, whose very names are unknown to the historians of literature. First comes *The Roman Empress* by William Joyner, printed in 1671. Joyner was an Oxford man, a fellow of Magdalen College. The little that has been recorded about him makes one wish to know more. He became persuaded of the truth of the Catholic faith, and made a voluntary resignation of his Oxford fellowship. He had to do something, and so he wrote this tragedy, which he dedicated to Sir Charles Sedley, the poet, and got acted at the Theatre Royal. The cast contains two good actors' names, Mohun and Kynaston, and it seems that it enjoyed a considerable success. But doubtless the stage was too rough a field for the gentle Oxford scholar. He retired into a sequestered country village, where he lingered on till 1706, when he was nearly ninety. But Joyner was none of the worst of

poets. Here is a fragment of *The Roman Empress*, which is by no means despicably versed:

> O thou bright, glorious morning,
> Thou Oriental spring-time of the day,
> Who with thy mixed vermilion colours paintest
> The sky, these hills and plains! thou dost return
> In thy accustom'd manner, but with thee
> Shall ne'er return my wonted happiness.

Through his Roman tragedy there runs a pensive vein of sadness, as though the poet were thinking less of his Aurelia and his Valentius than of the lost common-room and the arcades of Magdalen to be no more revisited.

Our next play is a worse one, but much more pretentious. It is the *Usurper*, of 1668, the first of four dramas published by the Hon. Edward Howard, one of Dryden's aristocratic brothers-in-law. Edward Howard is memorable for a couplet constantly quoted from his epic poem of *The British Princes*:

> A vest as admired Vortiger had on,
> Which from a naked Pict his grandsire won.

Poor Howard has received the laughter of generations for representing Vortiger's grandsire as thus having stripped one who was bare already. But this is the wickedness of some ancient wag, perhaps of Dryden himself, who loved to laugh at his brother-in-law. At all events, the first (and, I suppose, only) edition of *The British Princes* is before me at this moment, and the second of these lines certainly runs:

> Which from this island's foes his grandsire won.

Thus do the critics, leaping one after another, like so many sheep, follow the same wrong track, in this case for a couple of centuries. The *Usurper* is a tragedy, in

which a Parasite, "a most perfidious villain," plays a mysterious part. He is led off to be hanged at last, much to the reader's satisfaction who murmurs, in the words of R. L. Stevenson: "There's an end of that."

But though the *Usurper* is dull, we reach a lower depth and muddier lees of wit in the *Carnival*, a comedy by Major Thomas Porter, of 1664. It is odd, however, that the very worst production, if it be more than two hundred years old, is sure to contain some little thing interesting to a modern student. The *Carnival* has one such peculiarity. Whenever any of the characters is left alone on the stage, he begins to soliloquise in the stanza of Gray's *Churchyard Elegy*. This is a very quaint innovation, and one which possibly occurred to brave Major Porter in one of the marches and countermarches of the Civil War.

But the man who perseveres is always rewarded, and the fourth play in our volume really repays us for pushing on so far. Here is a piece of wild and ghostly poetry that is well worth digging out of the Duke of Newcastle's *Humorous Lovers*:

> At curfew-time, and at the dead of night,
> I will appear, thy conscious soul to fright,
> Make signs, and beckon thee my ghost to follow
> To sadder groves, and churchyards, where we'll hollo
> To darker caves and solitary woods,
> To fatal whirlpools and consuming floods;
> I'll tempt thee to pass by the unlucky ewe,
> Blasted with cursed droppings of mildew;
> Under an oak, that ne'er bore leaf, my moans
> Shall there be told thee by the mandrake's groans;
> The winds shall sighing tell thy cruelty,
> And how thy want of love did murder me;
> And when the cock shall crow, and day grow near,
> Then in a flash of fire I'll disappear.

But I cannot persuade myself that his Grace of

Newcastle wrote those lines himself. Published in 1677, they were as much of a portent as a man in trunk hose and a slashed doublet. The Duke had died a month or two before the play was published; he had grown to be, in extreme old age, the most venerable figure of the Restoration, and it is possible that the *Humorous Lovers* may have been a relic of his Jacobean youth. He might very well have written it, so old was he, in Shakespeare's lifetime. But the Duke of Newcastle was never a very skilful poet, and it is known that he paid James Shirley to help him with his plays. I feel convinced that if all men had their own, the invocation I have just quoted would fly back into the works of Shirley, and so, no doubt, would the following quaintest bit of conceited fancy. It is part of a fantastical feast which Boldman promises to the Widow of his heart:

> The twinkling stars shall to our wish
> Make a grand salad in a dish;
> Snow for our sugar shall not fail,
> Fine candied ice, comfits of hail;
> For oranges, gilt clouds we'll squeeze;
> The Milky Way we'll turn to cheese;
> Sunbeams we'll catch, shall stand in place
> Of hotter ginger, nutmegs, mace;
> Sun-setting clouds for roses sweet,
> And violet skies strewed for our feet;
> The spheres shall for our music play,
> While spirits dance the time away.

This is extravagant enough, but surely very picturesque. I seem to see the supper-room of some Elizabethan castle after an elaborate royal masque. The Duchess, who has been dancing, richly attired in sky-coloured silk, with gilt wings on her shoulders, is attended to the refreshments by the florid Duke, personating the river Thamesis, with a robe of cloth of silver around

him. It seems the sort of thing a poet so habited might be expected to say between a galliard and a coranto.

At first sight we seem to have reached a really good rhetorical play when we arrive at Bancroft's tragedy of *Sertorius*, published in 1679, and so it would be if Dryden and Lee had never written. But its seeming excellence is greatly lessened when we recollect that *All for Love* and *Mithridates*, two great poems which are almost good plays, appeared in 1678, and inspired our poor imitative Bancroft. *Sertorius* is written in smooth and well-sustained blank verse, which is, however, nowhere quite good enough to be quoted. I suspect that John Bancroft was a very interesting man. He was a surgeon, and his practice lay particularly in the theatrical and literary world. He acquired, it is said, from his patients "a passion for the Muses," and an inclination to follow in the steps of those whom he cured or killed. The dramatist Ravenscroft wrote an epilogue to *Sertorius*, in which he says that

> Our poet to learned critics does submit,
> But scorns those little vermin of the pit,
> Who noise and nonsense vent instead of wit,

and no doubt Bancroft had aims more professional than those of the professional playwrights themselves. He wrote three plays, and lived until 1696. One fancies the discreet and fervent poet-surgeon, laden with his secrets and his confidences. Why did he not write memoirs, and tell us what it was that drove Nat Lee mad, and how Otway really died, and what Dryden's habits were? Why did he not purvey magnificent indiscretions whispered under the great periwig of Wycherley, or repeat that splendid story about Etheredge and my Lord Mulgrave? Alas! we would have

given a wilderness of *Sertoriuses* for such a series of memoirs.

The volume of plays is not exhausted. Here is Weston's *Amazon Queen*, of 1667, written in pompous rhymed heroics; here is *The Fortune Hunters*, a comedy of 1689, the only play of that brave fellow, James Carlile, who, being brought up an actor, preferred "to *be* rather than to *personate* a hero," and died in gallant fight for William of Orange, at the battle of Aughrim. Here is *Mr. Anthony*, a comedy written by the Right Honourable the Earl of Orrery, and printed in 1690, a piece never republished among the Earl's works, and therefore of some special interest. But I am sure my reader is exhausted, even if the volume is not, and I spare him any further examination of these obscure dramas, lest he should say, as Peter Pindar did of Dr. Johnson, that I

> Set wheels on wheels in motion—such a clatter!
> To force up one poor nipperkin of water;
> Bid ocean labour with tremendous roar
> To heave a cockle-shell upon the shore.

I will close, therefore, with one suggestion to the special student of comparative literature—namely, that it is sometimes in the minor writings of an age, where the bias of personal genius is not strongly felt, that the general phenomena of the time are most clearly observed. *The Amazon Queen* is in rhymed verse, because in 1667 this was the fashionable form for dramatic poetry; *Sertorius* is in regular and somewhat restrained blank verse, because in 1679 the fashion had once more chopped round. What in Dryden or Otway might be the force of originality may be safely taken as the drift of the age in these imitative and floating nonentities.

GERARD'S HERBAL

EDMUND GOSSE: *Gossip in a Library*

The Herbail *or General Historie of Plantes. Gathered by John Gerarde, of London, Master in Chirvrgerie. Very much enlarged and amended by Thomas Johnson, citizen and apothecarye of London. London, printed by Adam Islip, Joice Norton, and Richard Whitakers. Anno* 1633.

THE proverb says that a door must be either open or shut. The bibliophile is apt to think that a book should be either little or big. For my own part, I become more and more attached to "dumpy twelves"; but that does not preclude a certain discreet fondness for folios. If a man collects books, his library ought to contain a Herbal; and if he has but room for one, that should be the best. The luxurious and sufficient thing, I think, is to possess what booksellers call "the right edition of Gerard"; that is to say, the volume described at the head of this paper. There is no handsomer book to be found, none more stately or imposing, than this magnificent folio of sixteen hundred pages, with its close, elaborate letterpress, its innumerable plates, and John Payne's fine frontispiece in compartments, with Theophrastus and Dioscorides facing one another, and the author below them, holding in his right hand the new-found treasure of the potato plant.

This edition of 1633 is the final development of what had been a slow growth. The sixteenth century witnessed a great revival, almost a creation of the science

of botany. People began to translate the great *Materia Medica* of the Greek physician, Dioscorides of Anazarba, and to comment upon it. The Germans were the first to append woodcuts to their botanical descriptions, and it is Otto Brunfelsius, in 1530, who has the credit of being the originator of such figures. In 1554 there was published the first great Herbal, that of Rembertus Dodonæus, body-physician to the Emperor Maximilian II., who wrote in Dutch. An English translation of this, brought out in 1578 by Henry Lyte, was the earliest important Herbal in our language. Five years later, in 1583, a certain Dr. Priest translated all the botanical works of Dodonæus, with much greater fulness than Lyte had done, and this volume was the germ of Gerard's far more famous production. John Gerard was a Cheshire man, born in 1545, who came up to London, and practised there as a surgeon.

According to his editor and continuator, Thomas Johnson, who speaks of Gerard with startling freedom, this excellent man was by no means well equipped for the task of compiling a great Herbal. He knew so little Latin, according to this too candid friend, that he imagined Leonard Fuchsius, who was a German contemporary of his own, to be one of the ancients. But Johnson is a little too zealous in magnifying his own office. He brings a worse accusation against Gerard, if I understand him rightly to charge him with using Dr. Priest's manuscript collections after his death, without giving that physician the credit of his labours. When Johnson made this accusation, Gerard had been dead twenty-six years. In any case it seems certain that Gerard's original *Herbal*, which, beyond question, surpassed all its predecessors when it was printed in folio in 1597, was built upon the ground-work of

Priest's translation of Dodonæus. Nearly forty years later, Thomas Johnson, himself a celebrated botanist, took up the book, and spared no pains to re-issue it in perfect form. The result is the great volume before us, an elephant among books, the noblest of all the English *Herbals*. Johnson was seventy-two years of age when he got this gigantic work off his hands, and he lived eleven years longer to enjoy his legitimate success.

The great charm of this book at the present time consists in the copious woodcuts. Of these there are more than two thousand, each a careful and original study from the plant itself. In the course of two centuries and a half, with all the advance in appliances, we have not improved a whit on the original artist of Gerard's and Johnson's time. The drawings are all in strong outline, with very little attempt at shading, but the characteristics of each plant are given with a truth and a simplicity which are almost Japanese. In no case is this more extraordinary than in that of orchids, or "satyrions," as they were called in the days of the old herbalist. Here, in a succession of little figures, each not more than six inches high, the peculiarity of every portion of a full-grown flowering specimen of each species is given with absolute perfection, without being slurred over on the one hand, or exaggerated on the other. For instance, the little variety called "ladies' tresses" (*Spiranthes*), which throws a spiral head of pale green blossom out of dry pastures, appears here with small bells hanging on a twisted stem, as accurately as the best photograph could give it, although the process of woodcutting, as then practised in England, was very rude, and although almost all other English illustrations of the period are rough and inartistic. It is plain that in every instance the botanist himself drew the form,

with which he was already intelligently familiar, on the block, with the living plant lying at his side.

The plan on which the herbalist lays out his letter-press is methodical in the extreme. He begins by describing his plant, then gives its habitat, then discusses its nomenclature, and ends with a medical account of its nature and virtues. It is, of course, to be expected that we should find the fine old names of plants enshrined in Gerard's pages. For instance, he gives to the deadly nightshade the name, which now only lingers in a corner of Devonshire, the "dwale." As an instance of his style, I may quote a passage from what he has to say about the virtues, or rather vices, of this plant:

> Banish it from your gardens and the use of it also, being a plant so furious and deadly; for it bringeth such as have eaten thereof into a dead sleep wherein many have died, as hath been often seen and proved by experience both in England and elsewhere. But to give you an example hereof it shall not be amiss. It came to pass that three boys of Wisbeach, in the Isle of Ely, did eat of the pleasant and beautiful fruit hereof, two whereof died in less than eight hours after they had eaten of them. The third child had a quantity of honey and water mixed together given him to drink, causing him to vomit often. God blessed this means, and the child recovered. Banish, therefore, these pernicious plants out of your gardens, and all places near to your houses where children do resort.

Gerard has continually to stop his description that he may repeat to his readers some anecdote which he remembers. Now it is how "Master Cartwright, a gentleman of Gray's Inn, who was grievously wounded into the lungs," was cured with the herb called "Saracen's Compound," "and that, by God's permission, in short space." Now it is to tell us that he has found

yellow archangel growing under a sequestered hedge: "on the left hand as you go from the village of Hampstead, near London, to the church," or that "this amiable and pleasant kind of primrose" (a sort of oxlip) was first brought to light by Mr. Hesketh, "a diligent searcher after simples," in a Yorkshire wood. While the groundlings were crowding to see new plays by Shirley and Massinger, the editor of this volume was examining fresh varieties of auricula in "the gardens of Mr. Tradescant and Mr. Tuggie." It is wonderful how modern the latter statement sounds, and how ancient the former. But the garden seems the one spot on earth where history does not assert itself, and, no doubt, when Nero was fiddling over the blaze of Rome, there were florists counting the petals of rival roses at Pæstum as peacefully and conscientiously as any gardeners of to-day.

The herbalist and his editor write from personal experience, and this gives them a great advantage in dealing with superstitions. If there was anything which people were certain about in the early part of the seventeenth century, it was that the mandrake only grew under a gallows, where the dead body of a man had fallen to pieces, and that when it was dug up it gave a great shriek, which was fatal to the nearest living thing. Gerard contemptuously rejects all these and other tales as "old wives' dreams." He and his servants have often digged up mandrakes, and are not only still alive, but listened in vain for the dreadful scream. It might be supposed that such a statement, from so eminent an authority, would settle the point, but we find Sir Thomas Browne, in the next generation, battling these identical popular errors in the pages of his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica.* In the like manner, Gerard's

botanical evidence seems to have been of no use in persuading the public that mistletoe was not generated out of birdlime dropped by thrushes into the boughs of trees, or that its berries were not desperately poisonous. To observe and state the truth is not enough. The ears of those to whom it is proclaimed must be ready to accept it.

Our good herbalist, however, cannot get through his sixteen hundred accurate and solemn pages without one slip. After accompanying him dutifully so far, we double up with uncontrollable laughter on p. 1587, for here begins the chapter which treats "of the Goose Tree, Barnacle Tree, or the Tree bearing Geese." But even here the habit of genuine observation clings to him. The picture represents a group of stalked barnacles—those shrimps fixed by their antennæ, which modern science, I believe, calls *Lepas anatifera*; by the side of these stands a little goose, and the suggestion of course is that the latter has slipped out of the former, although the draughtsman has been far too conscientious to represent the occurrence. Yet the letterpress is confident that in the north parts of Scotland there are trees on which grow white shells, which ripen, and then, opening, drop little living geese into the waves below. Gerard himself avers that from Guernsey and Jersey he brought home with him to London shells, like limpets, containing little feathery objects, "which, *no doubt*, were the fowls called Barnacles." It is almost needless to say that these objects really were the plumose and flexible *cirri* which the barnacles throw out to catch their food with, and which lie, like a tiny feather-brush, just within the valves of the shell when the creature is dead. Gerard was plainly unable to refuse credence to the mass of evidence which

presented itself to him on this subject, yet he closes with a hint that this seems rather a "fabulous breed" of geese.

With the Barnacle Goose Tree the *Herbal* proper closes in these quaint words:

> And thus having, through God's assistance, discoursed somewhat at large of grasses, herbs, shrubs, trees and mosses, and certain excrescences of the earth, with other things moe, incident to the history thereof, we conclude and end our present volume with this wonder of England. For the which God's name be ever honoured and praised.

And so, at last, the Goose Tree receives the highest sanction.

ARLES

Louis Golding: *To-Day*

Arles is a place only of echoes. There are no substantial sounds in that old city by the Rhône. For the women buy loaves of bread in their shadowy hidden shops like witches bartering dreams, and the wise little children play with marbles like old men in the woods of Faery playing with men's souls. There is never silence in Arles, and never loud sound—only echoes. Even the broad Rhône that sweeps through the meadows of Arles has not the voice of a living man's river, but has only recollections—ladies of the French chivalry who walked among the willows with passionate knights; helmeted Romans clanking down the quay-side to barges terrorful with slaves; and even—when the evening is as still as ever the evening shall be in Arles—recollections of those broad-browed Greeks with their wonderful adorable gods, who had pushed up from Massilia by the sea.

Arthur Symons has said of Arles that it is an autumn city. It is a city of neither spring nor autumn, but of the season that never was on sea or land. The first buds on the hedgerows before they burst into flower are already heavy with memories. And the snow that falls elsewhere in the Midi is snow, but it is not snow in Arles. It is the virgin garment of St. Trophime, or a funeral toga over a dead Roman city.

I stood one day in the market-place outside the Roman Theatre. Above a *brasserie* smothered in the foliage of

a fig-tree rose the two surviving columns of the theatre. A man in a pair of threadbare trousers and a faded red shirt, and with naked feet, stood aimlessly in front of a little table. A crowd drifted aimlessly round him, and I aimlessly joined the rest. "Une harpe des dieux," he was saying, and his voice was like the wind in a rifted chimney, "que j'ai trouvée moi-même dans les arènes. Deux sous, l'harpe avec le secret!" A penny for the harp of the gods, and with it the secret! The great things in life are of little price, and the greatest are of no price at all. So I bought the harp "avec le secret." It was of hollowed clay with the stops cut at mysterious intervals. Then the vendor of secrets taught us the high music, and the sound was the echo of Arles—the echo of Roman splendour triumphant, Roman splendour waning in the barbarian twilight; the echo of processional choristers in cathedrals deserted centuries ago. I went down to the river that afternoon and played amongst the flowerless irises. I caught something of the magic that the blue-trousered wizard had evoked, fluting in the square. Weeks later in Normandy I took out the harp, but my song was tuneless and cracked. Weeks passed again, and I took out the harp in a stuffy room in an English town. The harp had not a single note. It wheezed like an old man in a draught. The secret that Arles had taught me was down in Arles among the irises and the echoes.

Near the broken baths of an emperor, by the riverside, there is a nameless and desecrated ruin. It is a church of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, so beautiful even in its unconsidered decay that it is hardly conceivable how men could have builded it. So exquisite is its workmanship, and so superhuman its design, that, they tell me, men dared not worship here, burdened

with all the big and little sins they carried about and would not abandon. There was a sense of the Presence here so immediate and absorbing that men dared not assist at the Mass, so overwhelmingly did they feel that the actual Incarnation had taken place. Even the priests felt their protestations hypocritical at the third fateful ringing of the bell, and their faith like a weak marsh-light in the blaze that surrounded the altar. So men builded another church with richer endowments, and the priests followed. And men went by the old church with averted head, and priests hurried away, fearful of sounds and gleams. Nowadays there are horses' stables in the south aisle of the church, and behind the mullions of the windows there are cheap boards to keep out the sky, and there is a refuse-heap inside the west porch. Here, as the darkness gathered, I spent the last evening the gods gave me in Arles. On the tumbled fragments of the arches lay the dust of hundreds of years. Outside, the gulls were flying in great curves down the sunset river to the sea. A late bird was singing sleepily in the elms by the water. But within no bird was singing, only the rustle of invisible, immaterial wings. When a shaft of sunset came through the crevices, it staggered in as if already weary with antiquity. Dusk deepened.

The bird in the elms sang no longer. The Mystery gathered round me almost as closely as the mantle of Death. My head was falling between my hands, when suddenly the night became vibrant around, a firm tread clanging over the stones. I cried loudly, "Who are you?" And a French soldier, tall and straight and like a tree, strode to me through the dusk. "I am the Heir of Battles," he said, "and I am the Builder." Even in the darkness I could see the flashing of his

eyes. "You are English," he said, "and what do you here?" "Poilu, you are speaking strangely," I replied, "but we are friends, you and I, and I will answer. I am here because the dead empires are more to me than the living empires; because the sorrows suffered in wars a thousand years ago grieve me more than my friends' sorrows and my own in the wars of to-day. I am here, in this city, because of the strong beauty of Rome and the fervid beauty of the Middle Age, which are dead and entombed here. And I am here in this splendid and insulted shrine because Beauty was on the earth once and has passed hence for ever!"

The poilu laughed loud into the high shadowy vault.

"Little Englishman," he said, "listen to the Dream of the Builder which is a thousandfold stronger than the iron guns, and swifter than the blazing shells, and kindred to the immortal stars. You grieve because of the passing of the arenas and the marble theatres and the Gothic cathedrals. Exult now with me in a new Architecture, stupendous and resplendent, proud consort to the morning sun. For the Builders shall sweep away utterly the miserable fragments of Verdun and Arras and Ypres into the marshes of the sea. In that country devastated and seamed with war, the corn shall wave again in the wind, and the fruit-trees be heavy with fruit.

"Among the orchards and the singing rivers shall I, the Heir of Battles, and with me the other Builders and Dreamers, build such cities as the great world has not known—and the world shall say, 'Lo! greater far than Babylon, even more marvellous than Athens!' As the new cities rise in Flanders and Picardy they shall forget Rome and the Middle Age like the birds who forget their last year's lovers.

"Listen! When the shells were loudest over No-man's-land, we have heard the call to the new Building strongest and sweetest. When we burrowed deepest into the mine-galleries, and our eyes were thick with grime, the Star blazed most fiercely.

"The colonnades of the new Architecture shall be spacious beyond man's surmising. Innumerable towers shall dazzle the dawn. Out of our agony shall we build the greatest city, and out of the love wherewith we have loved each other in the cesspools at midnight.

"The bodies of our lovers shall be blended with the bricks, and our blood shall suffuse the mortar.

"Out of our bodies and blood an incomparable Beauty shall prevail."

There was silence a moment. Then, "Come," he said, suddenly gripping my arm, "in here it is only Death."

As we stumbled out into the night, an owl hooted somewhere from the heart of the ruins.

THE ART OF HOLIDAY

HOLBROOK JACKSON: *Southward Ho! and Other Essays*

IT matters very little where you go, or when you go; it matters little what you do. The thing itself matters; and that thing is holiday—the break from the monotony of routine and the discipline of earning a living. To get away, to be free for a brief spell, to feel that you have not to get up at the appointed hour, to know that you can linger over your breakfast, to realise that the usual business train will depart without you, to look upon new scenes and strange faces, to breathe fresh air, to hear different sounds, to do different things, or better still, to do nothing at all—that is holiday. Fix upon a place, no matter what place, anywhere; put a few things into a bag, the fewer the better, and go. The change, I repeat, is the thing; scenery or amusements hardly count in this great business, for unless a man carry all the beauty of the world in his own mind, and all the joy of life in his own heart, he will not find them elsewhere. I have small sympathy with those wide-eyed enthusiasts who babble about spirit of place. Unless we carry the spirit of place within us as a part of our personal kit, we shall not find it elsewhere. We are joy and sorrow, and the world about us but material for their expression.

I doubt whether there are any sound rules for holiday-making, save that one which I have called change; and

that after all is not arbitrary—it is fundamental. A holiday is no holiday unless you have change. The health of the human mind is stimulated by change of scene just as change of air is a tonic for the body. Change is good physic for all social pursuits; without it we get stale, and to get stale is to lose caste, to become inferior. More than half the pleasure we have in contemplating a holiday is, I believe, born of the instinct of change. But change is not merely the transference of oneself and one's family from one place to another. Far too many people court disappointment by that interpretation every year. To go away with your family is, in a great many instances, nothing but an elaborate contrivance for staying at home. I know nothing more depressing, with the possible exception of a debate in the House of Commons, than the sight of so many family groups at the seaside during the holiday season who are obviously bored past murmuring. These well-intentioned people are suffering from social starvation. They have change of air, change of scene, and change of some habits, but possessing all these and lacking change of society, they lack everything that makes for a successful holiday. Family life is an invaluable and delightful thing, and deservedly one of our most treasured institutions; for that very reason I am always being startled into surprise because we do not take much more care of it. One of the easiest ways of taking care of it is to break it up occasionally, and the best time for that operation would seem to be the annual holiday. But far from recognising this, the majority of people prefer to translate their family, personalities, habits, and associations to a holiday resort. Such proceeding can only be successful by accident, for the simple reason that the family does not leave home, it takes

home away with it. Which is a direct violation of the fundamental law of change.

But change, though important, is not inclusive. There are other and more subtle ingredients for a real holiday. These, however, vary with the individual, and provided that you have the necessary facilities it matters little what you do so long, of course, as you do what you like. Generally speaking, and if you are wise, you will leave things to chance. To map out a holiday, with times and places all catalogued and certified, with a list of things to see and how to see them, does, I know, please many people, but all such elaborate methods are dangerously akin to routine, and routine is useful only to those who cannot do without it. I once knew a man who was taking a holiday on the Yorkshire moors. He would walk about all day in an old suit of clothes, occasionally resting on the grey old stone walls of the wolds, or lolling in the heather, smoking an old pipe, talking to any chance acquaintance, and when hungry he would call at a wayside inn and refresh himself before once again taking up the great business of loafing. But one day he had an experience which ever afterwards he looked back at with a thrill of delight. Loafing down a moorside one morning, he came across a gang of navvies digging a big hole in the earth. He watched them for awhile, then, fascinated by the swing and rhythm of their labour, he jumped into the hole, and, after a few words of explanation, borrowed a shovel and a pick and spent the rest of the day in manual labour, resting at midday with the navvies, and eating their rough-and-ready food. Then he sauntered to his inn, dog-tired, but as happy as a god. That man got more out of his holidays than any man I have known. But he never made any

fuss about it; indeed, he never called his holidays by that name. He used just to throw a few things into an old battered rucksack and disappear. He never used a map or itinerary of any sort; he simply disappeared, reappearing again in due course feeling and looking aggressively happy and insolently healthy.

The success of a holiday is, perhaps, largely a matter of temperament. Some people can be happy anywhere, others nowhere. And after you have philosophised to your heart's content, and read all the advertisements for the guidance of the holiday-maker, you feel that your work is in vain. There is really no sound pocket wisdom for the art of holiday, for every would-be holiday-maker is a separate problem, and in the final resort he must be his own guide, philosopher, and friend. One might suggest, as I have done, that for holiday he should do what he wants to do, but even that is only a piece of half wisdom, for which of us knows precisely what he wants to do! Most of us have devoted so much of our time to doing what others expect us to do that we have lost the faculty of pleasing ourselves. It was Mark Twain, I think, who said, with that hidden wisdom which was always a part of his humour, that there was only one better way of spending a holiday than lying under a tree with a book, namely, to lie under a tree without a book. I think the hint a very good one; but I generally find that most people follow it instinctively. How many times has one promised oneself much holiday reading, and how many times has that promise been unfulfilled? I have often dreamt of a really bookish holiday, a holiday, as it were, in a library, but I know I shall never have the courage to take such a holiday. Few people read books on a holiday, unless it rains, for if you are interested in the life about you

books are superfluous, and if you are bored you cannot abide them.

Perhaps modern life is becoming too rapid for overmuch dalliance with books, and it becomes increasingly more difficult for bookish persons to catch up with the lost reading of yesterday. Still, it is good to have dreams, and the dream of a holiday in a library is a very pleasant one. We realise something of it, I fancy, when we drop into our kit-bags a few friendly books, books that have stood the test of time and the sterner tests of familiarity—the *Religio Medici*, *The Golden Treasury*, the *Essays of Elia*, the *Greek Anthology*, the *Compleat Angler*—holiday books all, because they promote reflection in a gentle and intimate way. And even if we never look at the insides of them, it is as consoling to know they are there as it is to know that you have propitiated Æsculapius by providing yourself with simple prophylactics against indigestion and chill.

There is a certain piety in this time-worn promise of a bit of reading next holiday, and one does actually select one's portable library with becoming reverence, even if that part of the outfit sees the least service during the vacation. At the same time I do not underestimate the value of the good resolution which lies behind this empty and innocent little piety; on the contrary, empty pieties and good resolutions are part of the natural equipment of every proper man. They were never meant to be performed or fulfilled, but in the scheme of things they serve their purpose. It is good to walk on a sea beach during the month of August if only to observe the triumphant defeat of good resolutions under the shade of the cliffs or the awnings of the camp chairs. There you will see dozens

of fathers and mothers of families with printed matter before them, sometimes actually resting on their faces, and all bathed in what the poet Young has called " calm Nature's sweet restorer—gentle sleep." When I see these happy people thus employed I know their holiday is doing them good, and I know that literature, neglected, though not despised, has aided and abetted the kindly gods of health.

Thus does experience support my suggestion that holiday is artless rather than artful, using both words literally as all honest writers should. But as I write I feel the prospective opposition of possible readers whose faith is firmly based in some cunningly arranged plan of campaign. Now I like to believe that I am neither cynical nor pessimistic, yet I can see quite plainly, as in a kind of mental cinematograph, the coast-wise towns of the British Islands in gala dress and thronged with strangers upon whom the natives smile a smile of welcome not entirely free of self-interest. The strangers, or rather " visitors," to give them their proper title, are the familiar British folk of the inland towns and cities on vacation; they are clad less severely than when they are at home: men assume light flannels, bright lounge coats and crushed or flapping hats, and there seems to be a conspiracy against the waistcoat; women are dressed less carefully and more comfortably than you might think possible. But mere apparel does not give you a full insight into the character of this holiday crowd; to get that you must observe its habits. From such an observation you will learn that all these people are practising a kind of traditional optimism: they are enjoying themselves according to certain settled principles—laboriously doing nothing, or frantically doing something—though which is which it is

not easy to discover: lounging on the sands; swimming, or just bobbing about in the water; riding on donkeys or in char-a-bancs; getting backache in a rowing boat, or seasick in a yawl; promenading along the front or discussing nautical matters with expectorating and portly longshoremen (who have "never been upon the sea") on the jetty; listening to minstrels or pierrots and perhaps joining in the choruses (and, if you are of the fair sex, falling a little in love with the baritone or tenor, according to taste); being jolted on switch-back railways, or by the German band on the front —or on (or is it off?) the joy-wheel. Such are the aids to optimism in my vision of the seaside at holiday time, and I must confess to a certain amusement at it all. To the unsympathetic looker-on this annual business of joy-hunting seems preposterous; he finds some little difficulty in convincing himself that the holiday folk at the seaside during August are having a good time.

Not many things are certain in our haphazard world, but there is at least one thing about which there is little doubt, that is that those who seek happiness miss it, and those who discuss it, lack it. Therefore, I am always inclined to be suspicious of the ways of pleasure-seekers and happiness-mongers. Not that I would have people other than happy—if that is their desire. My suspicion is born of the conviction that both pleasure-seeking and happiness-mongering are futile attempts to discover and supply the undiscoverable. Happiness, like art, happens; it has neither formulæ, nor rules, nor systems; it droppeth as the gentle rain from Heaven upon just and unjust alike, and no man can say he has it because of his virtues, for verily, he may be flouted to his face by the sinner over the way who is happier

than he. It has, furthermore, been rumoured that man was made to mourn, and although Rumour was ever a jade, there is much evidence that she has truth on her side for once. But if it be true, as seemingly it is, knowledge of the fact would only intimidate the coward; the brave man is he who is happy in spite of fate. At the same time it must be conceded that there is a subtle joy even in sorrow; melancholy is not necessarily the opposite of happiness, it may be a part of it. One may even enjoy it, without taking one's pleasure sadly, as we say. Indeed, if there is any truth in Keats's thought that "in the very temple of delight veiled Melancholy hath her sovran shrine," the converse also may be true.

Sad folk must certainly gloat upon some secret treasure of joy, which is a sealed document to the merely happy, or they would not be so contented. I believe Mrs. Gummidge knew a deeper joy in life—lone, lorn, and sad though she was—than ever Mark Tapley imagined in his most preposterously and irritatingly happy moments. But of the two, I prefer Mrs. Gummidge; she at least was under no illusions about making other people happy or even of attempting the pursuit of happiness for herself. She was content to feel lonesome, and in the attainment of that state attaining also to bliss as a sort of by-product. As to that undeserving immortal Mark Tapley—I think we may look upon him as an amiable fraud, an illusion of the big heart of Charles Dickens. Your pertinacious optimist is a very sorry dog, and I am inclined to shun him as one shuns those sick souls who are forever cracking jokes ("comic fellows, funny men, and clowns in private life," as Sir W. S. Gilbert put it). But I do not deny the value of optimism nor the necessity of pleasure.

Optimism is one of the most powerful of human weapons against fate; it is almost as invincible as indifference. And, incidentally, it is the fundamental principle of society, for unless we believed that the majority of people, perhaps all people, were somehow and somewhere good and capable of joy, the thing we call society could not last for a week. Optimism is faith—faith in oneself, faith in one's fellows and faith in the world: and faith is the motive force of life. But you can never say that you have happiness any more than you can say you are going to have it; you either have it or have it not. It is only when it has fled that you discuss it. It is just as absurd for a man to say he is going to be happy, as it is for a man to say that he is going to be himself. Both promises are abstractions, nothing more, and to strive to become an abstraction is to court destruction.

So it is that I am just a little doubtful about the motley array of paraphernalia at the annual seaside wedding of work of play. It is obvious that some people get some fun out of these things. But the test of the sort of fun obtainable at a popular pleasure resort, one that really goes into the business on a grand scale, say Blackpool or Coney Island, may be realised in the development of the pleasure machine. Simple games and healthy exercises have long since ceased to satisfy the holiday crowd, with the result that the pursuit of pleasure has become a pursuit of novel sensation. Enterprising merchants of delight have risen to the occasion first by inventing swings and roundabouts, then artificial toboggan slides and switchback railways; from these the progress to water-chutes, big wheels, and high towers has been easy. But the demand for exhilaration is by no means appeased, so fresh ingenuity

has to be put forth in the interest of pleasure-seekers whose one desire seems to be giddiness and delirium. Avernus wheels are brought into being, and the pleasure-mongers, setting their monstrous brains to work, conceive wiggle-woggles and flip-flaps and topsy-turvies, and, save the mark, joy-wheels! This last might well be the climax and symbol of pleasure follies. You sit on a slightly convex revolving platform, flush with the floor, and you hold on to its smooth surface, like a beetle or a gecko, until the increasing rapidity of the revolutions hurls you off; "you" is, of course, plural, for the joy-wheel is a social machine, and you traffic with it in groups, scrimmaging somewhat to get the centre place, which by the laws of physics is most secure. You are thrown off singly and in knots, shrieking and laughing hysterically and fearfully, as many times as you like for threepence or sixpence, according to whether it is at Margate or Earl's Court. To such a pass as this has the search for the elixir of pleasure brought us.

Therefore—but is there a therefore? Is it not in point of fact an absurd pass for any species to have got itself into—and outside sane argument? Let us agree, then, reader, you and I, that when all is said and done, the best of all holidays is the holiday that comes upon you unawares. The time of the year matters little, the place not at all; persons may have something to do with it, but it is just as likely they may have nothing to do with it. You do not know precisely how it comes about, and you do not care; perhaps even you may not know it has come about at all until you look backwards after it is over, and you know it cannot be repeated: holidays don't repeat themselves. It may be that you have gone somewhere

on business, missed the train back, and found yourself wandering idly amid green fields or in a sleepy village with inviting inns and a grey old church. It may be that you have suddenly, for no obvious reason, thrown down your tools and fled, for some still less obvious reason, to a near or remote place. You may have spent half the time in a railway train, or you may have gone no farther afield than your own favourite subterranean café. But the experience has been distinguishable from your average daily experience; it has had about it a quiet cheerfulness, a holy calm, and if you feel that it has been worth the trouble, you have achieved holiday. Perhaps, then, there is no art of holiday—holidays just occur. Shall we agree on that, we two?

PETERPANTHEISM

HOLBROOK JACKSON: *Southward Ho! and Other Essays*

WHAT ill turn in the trend of evolution gave man the aspiration to grow up? It must have been an evil chance, for the secret desire of all is for eternal youth. No one surely who had his will of life would dream of growing up, and yet we all not only do it, but succeed in persuading ourselves that we like doing it.

We have even gone so far as to wean the imaginations of children from their rightful heritage and make them wish to become big, like father, or good, like mother. These ambitions are now commonplaces of childish imagination. But in spite of it all, the evidence is still against growing up. The purpose of the child is to live, to feel the mysterious presence of life in every limb, and in so far as he does this he is happy. But the purpose of the adult has become a febrile pursuit of the symbols of life. Real life fills him with dread, and success in his endeavour is his undoing.

Age is a tragedy; and the elderly person strives heroically to make the best of it by covering his retreat with pathetic attempts at superiority and wisdom, little arrogances and vanities which at bottom deceive nobody, not even himself. For well he knows, as he casts wistful glances at the pranks of childhood, that in spite of his imposing cry of "Eureka!" he has found nothing. What profit has a man if he gain the

whole world but lose his own youth? Perhaps, indeed, it would be more becoming in those who have grown up to admit the fact with fitting lamentation and humility, and, instead of flaunting their age with pomp and circumstance, cover their bodies with sackcloth and put ashes in their hair.

The great difficulty, however, is that men persist, in spite of bitter experience, in looking upon growing up as a worthy thing. Women are their superiors in this respect. Intuitively they know that age is a *cul-de-sac*, that it leads not even to heaven, for to get there one has to become as a little child. This, probably, is why most women disown the passing years.

Still even they grow up; indeed, are not women always a little older than men? Both nature and society seem to have conspired to make them so. But that is no excuse. Human beings ought not to be content to remain the slaves of either. Surely it is by the constant flouting of such authorities that new variations of life are attained. Neither gods nor millenniums are the outcome of passivity. Therefore, gentlewomen, put by your subterfuges about age, for you have been found out; we know you to be older than we men are, and our immemorial desire is that you should be younger.

Few serious attempts to restore the Golden Age have been made in modern times, but one of the greatest of these is that of Sir James M. Barrie. *Peter Pan* is more than a Christmas pantomime; it is a contribution to religious drama. It is a mystery play, giving significance to the childlike spirit of the universe. Peter Pan is a symbol of eternity, of that complete, unchangeable spirit of the world which is superior to the illusion of growing up: that dim vision which has set

bounds to the imagination of humanity ever since the elderly person usurped the throne of the child. *Peter Pan* reminds us again that the world has no final use for grown-up things, that cities and civilisations pass away, that monuments and institutions crumble into dust, that weeds are conquering the Coliseum, and that the life of the immemorial Sphinx is but a matter of time. Peter Pan is the emblem of the mystery of vitality, the thing that is always growing, but never grown.

He came among us some years ago, when our faith in the child had nearly gone. But even to-day we shall see that there is no place for little children in the average home, and that when a place is provided for them it is provided because they are a nuisance and a burden to the grown-ups. It might as well be admitted that children irritate us; and this means that we are no longer capable of entering into their kingdom. We revenge ourselves by teaching them all sorts of worthless knowledge. But we teach them nothing so worthless as this facile art of growing up. That is the final and unforgivable act of our hopelessly bewildered lives. We make our peace with the children by moulding them to our own image: perhaps, one of these days, for all things are possible, we shall become wise enough to permit the children to return the compliment.

The desire to make them as we are is the fatal desire of a lost cause. It means that communications with the child-world have been cut off, which is only another way of saying that we have abandoned our alliance with the main tendency of life. We have ceased to grow. We have, in fact, grown up, and are fit only for life's scrap-heap.

We talk of evolution; but half of the idea of evolution

is illusion, and the other half the assertion of the child-spirit. It is the child-spirit building castles in the air. And our talk of that little sister of evolution, progress, is not any more helpful; for progress is generally nothing more than a vain endeavour to put the clock forward. The only really vital thing in life is the unconscious abandonment of young things—the spirit of play. And if we think for a moment we shall see that it is play, or the contemplation of play, that gives us most joy. We never tire of watching the play of children or of young animals. That is sane and healthy; there are no better things to watch. Our approval links us with the living world again, just as our love of children does. That is why our delight in young life is always tinged with melancholy. Whilst we approve and love the ways of the young we unconsciously condemn our elderliness. We realise that the most superb adult is a dismal failure beside a child making mud pies or a kitten chasing its tail. But we rarely admit it; when there is a chance of our going so far we become frightened, and, shaking ourselves, we murmur something about sentimentality, and speedily commence growing old again, thereby displaying our impotence and our ignorance.

The sign that we have accomplished our ignoble aim, and grown up, is that we no longer have the impulse to play. We go about our business in colourless garments and surroundings, buying and selling and ruling with revolting solemnity. The last glimmering of the spark of play is seen in our shamelessly hiring people to play for us. We hire footballers and cricketers to play games for us, jockeys to ride for us, singers to sing for us, dancers to dance for us, and even pugilists and soldiers to fight for us.

Those who have become as little children will want to do all these things for themselves. They will no more desire to play by proxy than they will desire to live by proxy. Art has been described as the expression of man's joy in his work, and joyful work is the kind of work practised by those who have the courage to be young. It is fundamentally play, and no other kind of work really matters. We have some remote idea of this when we utter the commonplace that success depends largely upon one's doing the work one likes to do. It is also pretty generally recognised that there is no joy in what is merely laborious. Beyond all men the artist knows this: not because his work is easy, but because he is happy in his work. It is a wonderful game. "I pray God every day," said Corot, "that He will keep me a child; that is to say, that He will enable me to see and draw with the eye of a child." And France heard him sing as he painted. The childhood of the world was in that song and in its results.

Children are unconscious artists in living. How to reach this happy state is another matter; precise rules cannot be given, because there are none. Perhaps there is no direct way to the Golden Age, and even if there were, few of us would recognise it. However, there is at least one useful rule—that is, never to look upon the Golden Age as past. For the rest, we might follow Peter Pan, and refuse to grow up.

THE EARLY QUAKERS

MAURICE HEWLETT: *Extemporary Essays*

QUALITY, which in such an art as painting is a thing infallibly recognised yet hard to be defined, is resident in all expressions of the spirit of man. In letters we may call it style, and in religion, rather disagreeably, unction. One would certainly seek, and might easily find, a less greasy term for that unmistakable, inexpressible something which seems to thrill in the words, which causes the sentences to dilate, open and shut (as it were) like the embers of a wood-fire when they are used by a man "in the Spirit," as it is written, "on the Lord's day." One reads what appears to be the too familiar account of conviction of sin, conversion, certitude of truth and what not. The well-known symptoms are there, the well-worn locutions lap them round. Yet a difference is discernible; there is a bloom, a dewiness, a—what? Infinite as are the variations in the characters and persons of men, so are those of sincere writing. Such things are worth finding out.

The Society of Friends has lately put forward what it calls the First Part of its *Book of Discipline—Christian Life, Faith and Thought* (Friends' Bookshop, Bishopsgate), which is nothing less than a stream of testimony to the root of Quakerism, an anthology of its religious conversation from the seventeenth century onwards. It is closed only by the cover, for the stream is still flowing, and apparently with a strong tide. In this little book it is possible, I think, to detect with some

precision the quality of a faith which is as distinct from others as the practice of its adherents has always held them separate among Christians. Conversation, and the certainty of it, proceed, as I have said, upon familiar lines; but in the result—and that is the first thing to note about it—in the result it turns to serenity rather than disturbance, to joy and not to savagery, to a still ecstasy, if such a state can be. Zeal does not eat up the Quakers, but glows within them, steadily and mildly radiant.

George Fox himself strikes that note:

> As I had forsaken all the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those called the most experienced people. For I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. And when all my hope in them and in all men was gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, oh then, I heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition," and, when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy. . . . Thus, when God doth work, who shall let it? And this I knew experimentally.

That joy never left him, in whatever tribulations he was afterwards involved. Presently, as he says, "I saw all the world could do me no good; if I had had a king's diet, palace and attendance, all would have been as nothing: for nothing gave me comfort but the Lord by His Power." The serenity which fills his diary as with fragrance impelled him to charitable judgment, but at the same time as it fired his words taught how to be frugal of them. The fewness and fullness of his words, William Penn said, struck all his hearers; and yet—"The most awful, living, reverent frame I ever beheld, I must say, was his in prayer."

He died as he had lived:

> Divers Friends came to visit him in illness, unto some of whom he said: "All is well; the seed of God reigns over all, and over Death itself."

That is how to die—if you can.

What they had, Seed of God, or whatever—if I may put it so—was like a comfortable balance at the bank which tempted neither to profusion nor parsimony, but put the owner at peace with all the world. There would be no inclination to foppery in such a man: there was none in them. "The bent and stress of their ministry," Penn says, "was . . . a leaving off in religion the superfluous and reducing the ceremonious and formal part, and pressing earnestly the substantial, the necessary and profitable." One of the superfluities of life, as they found out early in the day, was blood-shedding. William Dewsbury, a Yorkshiremen, bore witness to that:

> I joined that little remnant which said they fought for the Gospel, but I found no rest to my soul among them. And the word of the Lord came unto me and said, "Put up thy sword into thy scabbard; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my children fight"—which word enlightened my heart and discovered the mystery of iniquity, and that the Kingdom of Christ was within, and was spiritual, and my weapons against them must be spiritual, the power of God.

Yet, as he said, he "never since played the coward," spending the greater part of his life cheerfully in prison. In New England they hanged for Quakerism, and many women suffered that death.

"Except ye become as little children." That they could do. There again is part of the Quaker quality—simplicity of reception of truth, simplicity of reaction

to it. Margaret Fell of Swarthmore was the wife of a Judge of Assize, visited in her husband's absence on circuit by George Fox. That was in 1652. In "Ulverston Steeplehouse," in her presence, Fox stood up and asked leave to speak. It was given him. He opened the Scriptures and said:

"What had any to do with the Scriptures, but as they came to the Spirit that gave them forth? You will say, Christ saith this, and the Apostles say this; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of Light, and what thou speakest, is it inwardly from God?" This opened me (says Margaret), so that it cut me to the heart; and then I saw clearly that *we were all wrong*. So I sat me down in my pew again and cried bitterly. And I cried in my spirit to the Lord, *We are all thieves, we are all thieves.* We have taken the Scriptures in words and know nothing of them ourselves.

A hundred years later that same divine childishness shows forth in another form, that of beautiful naïve speech. Thomas Story (*obiit* 1742) goes to the Friends' meeting at Broughton in Cumberland. Someone spoke, "yet I took not much notice of it . . . my concern was much rather to know whether they were a people gathered under a sense of the enjoyment of the presence of God in their meetings. . . . And the Lord answered my desire according to the integrity of my heart.

"For not long after I had sat down among them, that *heavenly and watery cloud overshadowing my mind brake into a sweet abounding shower of celestial rain*, and the greatest part of the meeting was broken together, dissolved and comforted in the same divine and holy presence and influence of the true, holy, and heavenly Lord, which was divers times repeated before the

meeting ended." That is very beautiful; but Story was a poet. Observe the rhythm of this:

> I was silent before the Lord, as a child not yet weaned;
> He put words in my mouth;
> And I sang forth his praise with an audible voice.
>
> I called unto my God out of the great deep;
> He put on bowels of mercy, and had compassion on me;
> Because his love was infinite,
> And his power without measure.
>
> He called for my life, and I offered it at his footstool;
> But he gave it to me as a prey,
> With unspeakable additions.

There is more of that grave and measured descant, but its quality is in what I quote. It was in all those men and women. William Dent, another Yorkshireman, must not be left out. He was a countryman. "His Quaker garb was spotlessly neat. His face spoke of indwelling light and peace with all mankind. When words came they were few and weighty." They certainly were.

It is told how he would drive fourteen miles to a Friends' meeting to worship. On one occasion he rose, and said, "God is love," and then sat down again. It is believed no listener forgot that sermon.

He should not. It was the whole thing in essence. It was all they knew, and all that they needed to know.

WIND IN THE DOWNS

MAURICE HEWLETT: *Extemporary Essays*

THE Avon Valley is handsomely a fortnight ahead of mine, as I have proved over and over again, but from what I saw to-day I should suppose that the Wylye ran through a warmer soil than any other of the Five Rivers. I saw a tree just outside Wilton covered with golden knops on the point of breaking—and that in a wind which made my heart feel like doing the same thing. I dare swear that in Lord Pembroke's park there will be several in full leaf. Avon will not provide such a sight yet awhile; and Ebble not for three weeks. You get in this country of ridge and hollow something approaching the sharp contrasts the South of France will give you—something approaching them, and yet, of course, if I can be understood, nothing like them. I remember driving from Le Puy to Pont Saint-Esprit —May the season. Le Puy had been hot enough for anyone; May weather intensified by the crater in which the town cowers and the tufa on which it roasts. From there, and from May, we climbed into March and fields of daffodil; from March into as bleak a February as you could dread in the Jura, and snow over all the waste; from that, down a mountain slide, into the valley of the Ardèche, where the hedgerows were full of dusty roses, and the peasants making hay. You won't do that in South Wilts, but you may have the Chalke Valley with its trees naked and sere, and the slopes of its hills white with winter bents, and over

the plain come down into Wilton to find magnolias in flower and house fronts smothered in Forsythia. Ours is the snuggest valley but poorest soil of any of the five, and our river, being the smallest, has not thrown up a broad bed of silt on either bank in which trees can grow tall and feel running water about their roots.

When our Mistral began to blow, which was ten days ago, I went up the drove immediately behind my house, and could hardly find a sign of a cowslip. I did find the leaves of one, but there were no more on a ledge which will be thick with them by and by. No wheat-ears to be seen, and no March hares in their amorous transports. The grass was as harsh as wire, the moss, disintegrated by the rain and dried by the wind, stood away from the earth like the ribs of a rotten ship. To come presently upon a little cloud of dog-violets was to be moved, as the Ancient Mariner was, by "a spring of love." Having blessed them unaware, I did it again, very conscious of the act of worship. Beyond that, further up the hill, one might have been in mid-winter. I struggled to the Race Plain, where the wind, straight from Nova Zembla, cut through my clothes like a knife. As usual, I encountered a little scattered fleet of gypsies, tacking into the jaws of it; a sorry nag straining at a cart full of poles and miscellaneous junk; women and young girls encumbered with babies in their shawls, barefoot children padding about on their white heels, and one smooth secret-faced man, lord of the tattered seraglio, himself well clothed and unhampered. The women were too distressed even to look their usual petitions. I think they felt the wind rattling their bones together. But the sultan hailed me, and we conversed for a few moments behind a furze bush. They were from Sherborne, going to the Forest, into what he called

"summer quarters." "They will be glad of them, some of your ladies," I said, and he gave me a sharp look. "They are all right," he said. "They'll have to wait, like the best of us." He accepted a fill of his pipe, lit it, turned it downwards, nodded, plunged his hands, and went leisurely after his belongings. Myself, I went huddling home to a wood fire, feeling that he had the better of me in many ways. For one thing, he kept half a dozen women in order—which I could not do even if I would; for another, he did not allow the mere wind to interfere with his good pleasure, his lordly ease of mind. I admire, while I cannot esteem, gypsies. Their ways are not our ways.

The Race Plain is their highway from the West to their headquarters in the New Forest, as once it was ours to London. Nearly every furze clump all its length has the lewside blackened by the ruins of a fire. Night or day you will meet them coming or going, or pass a group of them snuggling or sleeping by a driftwood fire. Very rarely they come to beg or hawk clothes-pegs in the village, but mostly they keep to their green road. Great poachers, of course; but beyond a few stray fowls we don't hear of much thieving. It is strange how little they mix, even now, with our people; not strange, therefore, that we know so little of them. That mystery is occasionally the begetter of romance. I said somewhere, confirming Borrow, that their girls scorn our young men, and am sure it is true of the main of them. Yet there are half-breeds among them, plainly; and such generalisations cannot be quite true. I heard of a case only the other day, where some green-eyed waif of theirs cast her spells upon a farm-lad, bewitched and bemused him until, for love of her, he was led into bad courses. He used to meet her at night,

and their shelter in bad weather was a deserted barn in the hillside, a place locally known as Rats' Castle. From such association he was led on and on, left his home, threw up his work, and hid with her in the hollows of the hills. His people thought he had gone for a soldier, and made no more than perfunctory search. Then by and by things began to be missed—hens and their eggs, bread out of bakers' carts, milk out of dairies, even clothing from the washing-lines. And then, one fine night, Rats' Castle was discovered to be ablaze. The lad was taken and confessed to everything, but the girl was not found. I hope he got over his heartbreak during his term at Devizes, which he served alone. He exonerated her from all blame, took everything on his shoulders; and as he was found near the burning barn, and she not seen there, there was no evidence against her, though plenty of suspicion. He would not, perhaps could not, name her, but she was well known to the police, and has since been seen at fairs or in the market. She was pointed out to me in Sarum one Tuesday—quite young, with hair lighter than her tan, with narrowed, sidelong eyes, in a faded red blouse and black skirt. She stood motionless, biting a corner of her apron between her very white teeth—half vicious, half wild-cat. Then I was told the story, and was much moved to think of what never did, and in the nature of things, or of boy, never could have come out at the inquiry: any hint, namely, of the wild stress of passion, the lure of the romantic, or of what answers to it, which drew the devoted simpleton to forsake father and mother, industry and honesty, and to cleave to this *belle dame sans merci*, to thieve for her, and to take all the penalty. That is what he did; and he was not the first.

THE PLEASURES OF IGNORANCE

ROBERT LYND: *The Pleasures of Ignorance*[1]

IT is impossible to take a walk in the country with an average townsman—especially, perhaps, in April or May—without being amazed at the vast continent of his ignorance. It is impossible to take a walk in the country oneself without being amazed at the vast continent of one's own ignorance. Thousands of men and women live and die without knowing the difference between a beech and an elm, between the song of a thrush and the song of a blackbird. Probably in a modern city the man who can distinguish between a thrush's and a blackbird's song is the exception. It is not that we have not seen the birds. It is simply that we have not noticed them. We have been surrounded by birds all our lives, yet so feeble is our observation that many of us could not tell whether or not the chaffinch sings, or the colour of the cuckoo. We argue like small boys as to whether the cuckoo always sings as he flies or sometimes in the branches of a tree—whether Chapman drew on his fancy or his knowledge of nature in the lines:

> When in the oak's green arms the cuckoo sings,
> And first delights men in the lovely springs.

This ignorance, however, is not altogether miserable. Out of it we get the constant pleasure of discovery. Every fact of nature comes to us each spring, if only we are sufficiently ignorant, with the dew still on it. If

[1] Published in America by Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons.

we have lived half a lifetime without having ever even seen a cuckoo, and know it only as a wandering voice, we are all the more delighted at the spectacle of its runaway flight as it hurries from wood to wood, conscious of its crimes, and at the way in which it halts hawk-like in the wind, its long tail quivering, before it dares descend on a hillside of fir-trees where avenging presences may lurk. It would be absurd to pretend that the naturalist does not also find pleasure in observing the life of the birds, but his is a steady pleasure, almost a sober and plodding occupation, compared to the morning enthusiasm of the man who sees a cuckoo for the first time, and, behold, the world is made new.

And as to that, the happiness even of the naturalist depends in some measure upon his ignorance, which still leaves him new worlds of this kind to conquer. He may have reached the very Z of knowledge in the books, but he still feels half ignorant until he has confirmed each bright particular with his eyes. He wishes with his own eyes to see the female cuckoo—rare spectacle!—as she lays her egg on the ground and takes it in her bill to the nest in which it is destined to breed infanticide. He would sit day after day with a field-glass against his eyes in order personally to endorse or refute the evidence suggesting that the cuckoo *does* lay on the ground and not in a nest. And if he is so far fortunate as to discover this most secretive of birds in the very act of laying, there still remain for him other fields to conquer in a multitude of such disputed questions as whether the cuckoo's egg is always of the same colour as the other eggs in the nest in which she abandons it. Assuredly the men of science have no reason as yet to weep over their lost ignorance. If they seem to know everything, it is only because you and I know

almost nothing. There will always be a fortune of ignorance waiting for them under every fact they turn up. They will never know what song the Sirens sang to Ulysses any more than Sir Thomas Browne did.

If I have called in the cuckoo to illustrate the ordinary man's ignorance, it is not because I can speak with authority on that bird. It is simply because, passing the spring in a parish that seemed to have been invaded by all the cuckoos of Africa, I realised how exceedingly little I, or anybody else I met, knew about them. But your and my ignorance is not confined to cuckoos. It dabbles in all created things, from the sun and moon down to the names of the flowers. I once heard a clever lady asking whether the new moon always appears on the same day of the week. She added that perhaps it is better not to know, because, if one does not know when or in what part of the sky to expect it, its appearance is always a pleasant surprise. I fancy, however, the new moon always comes as a surprise even to those who are familiar with her time-tables. And it is the same with the coming in of spring and the waves of the flowers. We are not the less delighted to find an early primrose because we are sufficiently learned in the services of the year to look for it in March or April rather than in October. We know, again, that the blossom precedes and not succeeds the fruit of the apple-tree, but this does not lessen our amazement at the beautiful holiday of a May orchard.

At the same time there is perhaps a special pleasure in re-learning the names of many of the flowers every spring. It is like re-reading a book that one has almost forgotten. Montaigne tells us that he had so bad a memory that he could always read an old book as though he had never read it before. I have myself a capri-

cious and leaking memory. I can read *Hamlet* itself and *The Pickwick Papers* as though they were the work of new authors and had come wet from the press, so much of them fades between one reading and another. There are occasions on which a memory of this kind is an affliction, especially if one has a passion for accuracy. But this is only when life has an object beyond entertainment. In respect of mere luxury, it may be doubted whether there is not as much to be said for a bad memory as for a good one. With a bad memory one can go on reading Plutarch and *The Arabian Nights* all one's life. Little shreds and tags, it is probable, will stick even in the worst memory, just as a succession of sheep cannot leap through a gap in a hedge without leaving a few wisps of wool on the thorns. But the sheep themselves escape, and the great authors leap in the same way out of an idle memory and leave little enough behind.

And if we can forget books, it is as easy to forget the months and what they showed us when once they are gone. Just for the moment I tell myself that I know May like the multiplication table and could pass an examination on its flowers, their appearance and their order. To-day I can affirm confidently that the buttercup has five petals. (Or is it six? I knew for certain last week.) But next year I shall probably have forgotten my arithmetic, and may have to learn once more not to confuse the buttercup with the celandine. Once more I shall see the world as a garden through the eyes of a stranger, my breath taken away with surprise by the painted fields. I shall find myself wondering whether it is science or ignorance which affirms that the swift (that black exaggeration of the swallow and yet a kinsman of the humming-bird) never settles even

on a nest, but disappears at night into the heights of the air. I shall learn with fresh astonishment that it is the male, and not the female, cuckoo that sings. I may have to learn again not to call the campion a wild geranium, and to re-discover whether the ash comes early or late in the etiquette of the trees. A contemporary English novelist was once asked by a foreigner what was the most important crop in England. He answered without a moment's hesitation: "Rye." Ignorance so complete as this seems to me to be touched with magnificence; but the ignorance even of illiterate persons is enormous. The average man who uses a telephone could not explain how a telephone works. He takes for granted the telephone, the railway train, the linotype, the aeroplane, as our grandfathers took for granted the miracles of the Gospels. He neither questions nor understands them. It is as though each of us investigated and made his own only a tiny circle of facts. Knowledge outside the day's work is regarded by most men as a gewgaw. Still we are constantly in reaction against our ignorance. We rouse ourselves at intervals and speculate. We revel in speculations about anything at all—about life after death or about such questions as that which is said to have puzzled Aristotle, "why sneezing from noon to midnight was good, but from night to noon unlucky." One of the greatest joys known to man is to take such a flight into ignorance in search of knowledge. The great pleasure of ignorance is, after all, the pleasure of asking questions. The man who has lost this pleasure or exchanged it for the pleasure of dogma, which is the pleasure of answering, is already beginning to stiffen. One envies so inquisitive a man as Jowett, who sat down to the study of physiology in his sixties. Most of us have lost the sense

of our ignorance long before that age. We even become vain of our squirrel's hoard of knowledge and regard increasing age itself as a school of omniscience. We forget that Socrates was famed for wisdom not because he was omniscient but because he realised at the age of seventy that he still knew nothing.

CLOUD

ALICE MEYNELL: *The Colour of Life, and Other Essays on Things Seen and Heard*

DURING a part of the year London does not see the clouds. Not to see the clear sky might seem her chief loss, but that is shared by the rest of England, and is, besides, but a slight privation. Not to see the clear sky is, elsewhere, to see the cloud. But not so in London. You may go for a week or two at a time, even though you hold your head up as you walk, and even though you have windows that really open, and yet you shall see no cloud, or but a single edge, the fragment of a form.

Guillotine windows never wholly open, but are filled with a doubled glass towards the sky when you open them towards the street. They are, therefore, a sure sign that for all the years when no other windows were used in London, nobody there cared much for the sky, or even knew so much as whether there were a sky.

But the privation of cloud is indeed a graver loss than the world knows. Terrestrial scenery is much, but it is not all. Men go in search of it; but the celestial scenery journeys to them. It goes its way round the world. It has no nation, it costs no weariness, it knows no bonds. The terrestrial scenery—the tourist's—is a prisoner compared with this. The tourist's scenery moves indeed, but only like Wordsworth's maiden, with earth's diurnal course; it is made as fast as its own graves. And for its changes it depends upon the

mobility of the skies. The mere green flushing of its sap makes only the least of its varieties; for the greater it must wait upon the visits of the light. Spring and autumn are inconsiderable events in a landscape compared with the shadows of a cloud.

The cloud controls the light, and the mountains on earth appear or fade according to its passage; they wear so simply, from head to foot, the luminous grey or the emphatic purple, as the cloud permits, that their own local colour and their own local season are lost and cease, effaced before the all-important mood of the cloud.

The sea has no mood except that of the sky and of its winds. It is the cloud that, holding the sun's rays in a sheaf as a giant holds a handful of spears, strikes the horizon, touches the extreme edge with a delicate revelation of light, or suddenly puts it out and makes the foreground shine.

Everyone knows the manifest work of the cloud when it descends and partakes in the landscape obviously, lies half-way across the mountain slope, stoops to rain heavily upon the lake, and blots out part of the view by the rough method of standing in front of it. But its greatest things are done from its own place, aloft. Thence does it distribute the sun.

Thence does it lock away between the hills and valleys more mysteries than a poet conceals, but, like him, not by interception. Thence it writes out and cancels all the tracery of Monte Rosa, or lets the pencils of the sun renew them. Thence, hiding nothing, and yet making dark, it sheds deep colour upon the forest land of Sussex, so that, seen from the hills, all the country is divided between grave blue and graver sunlight.

And all this is but its influence, its secondary work upon the world. Its own beauty is unaltered when it has no earthly beauty to improve. It is always great: above the street, above the suburbs, above the gas-works and the stucco, above the faces of painted white houses—the painted surfaces that have been devised as the only things able to vulgarise light, as they catch it and reflect it grotesquely from their importunate gloss. This is to be well seen on a sunny evening in Regent Street.

Even here the cloud is not so victorious as when it towers above some little landscape of rather paltry interest—a conventional river heavy with water, gardens with their little evergreens, walks, and shrubberies; and thick trees, impervious to the light, touched, as the novelists always have it, with "autumn tints." High over these rises, in the enormous scale of the scenery of clouds, what no man expected—an heroic sky. Few of the things that were ever done upon earth are great enough to be done under such a heaven. It was surely designed for other days. It is for an epic world. Your eyes sweep a thousand miles of cloud. What are the distances of earth to these, and what are the distances of the clear and cloudless sky? The very horizons of the landscape are near, for the round world dips so soon; and the distances of the mere clear sky are unmeasured—you rest upon nothing until you come to a star, and the star itself is immeasurable.

But in the sky of "sunny Alps" of clouds the sight goes farther, with conscious flight, than it could ever have journeyed otherwise. Man would not have known distance veritably without the clouds. There are mountains indeed, precipices and deeps, to which those of the earth are pigmy. Yet the sky-heights, being so

far off, are not overpowering by disproportion, like some futile building fatuously made too big for the human measure. The cloud in its majestic place composes with a little Perugino tree. For you stand or stray in the futile building, while the cloud is no mansion for man, and out of reach of his limitations.

The cloud, moreover, controls the sun, not merely by keeping the custody of his rays, but by becoming the counsellor of his temper. The cloud veils an angry sun, or, more terribly, lets fly an angry ray, suddenly bright upon tree and tower, with iron-grey storm for a background. Or when anger had but threatened, the cloud reveals him, gentle beyond hope. It makes peace, constantly, just before sunset.

It is in the confidence of the winds, and wears their colours. There is a heavenly game, on south-west wind days, when the clouds are bowled by a breeze from behind the evening. They are round and brilliant, and come leaping up from the horizon for hours. This is a frolic and haphazard sky.

All unlike this is the sky that has a centre, and stands composed about it. As the clouds marshalled the earthly mountains, so the clouds in turn are now ranged. The tops of all the celestial Andes aloft are swept at once by a single ray, warmed with a single colour. Promontory after league-long promontory of a stiller Mediterranean in the sky is called out of mist and grey by the same finger. The cloudland is very great, but a sunbeam makes all its nations and continents sudden with light.

All this is for the untravelled. All the winds bring him this scenery. It is only in London, for part of the autumn and part of the winter, that the unnatural smoke-fog comes between. And for many and many

a day no London eye can see the horizon, or the first threat of the cloud like a man's hand. There never was a great painter who had not exquisite horizons, and if Corot and Crome were right, the Londoner loses a great thing.

He loses the coming of the cloud, and when it is high in air he loses its shape. A cloud-lover is not content to see a snowy and rosy head piling into the top of the heavens; he wants to see the base and the altitude. The perspective of a cloud is a great part of its design—whether it lies so that you can look along the immense horizontal distances of its floor, or whether it rears so upright a pillar that you look up its mountain steeps in the sky as you look at the rising heights of a mountain that stands, with you, on the earth.

The cloud has a name suggesting darkness; nevertheless, it is not merely the guardian of the sun's rays and their director. It is the sun's treasurer; it holds the light that the world has lost. We talk of sunshine and moonshine, but not of cloud-shine, which is yet one of the illuminations of our skies. A shining cloud is one of the most majestic of all secondary lights. If the reflecting moon is the bride, this is the friend of the bridegroom.

Needless to say, the cloud of a thunderous summer is the most beautiful of all. It has spaces of a grey for which there is no name, and no other cloud looks over at a vanishing sun from such heights of blue air. The shower-cloud, too, with its thin edges, comes across the sky with so influential a flight that no ship going out to sea can be better worth watching. The dullest thing, perhaps, in the London streets is that people take their rain there without knowing anything of the cloud that drops it. It is merely rain, and means wet-

ness. The shower-cloud there has limits of time, but no limits of form, and no history whatever. It has not come from the clear edge of the plain to the south, and will not shoulder anon the hill to the north. The rain, for this city, hardly comes or goes; it does but begin and stop. No one looks after it on the path of its retreat.

THE FOLLY OF EDUCATION

RICHARD MIDDLETON: *The Day Before Yesterday*

OF all the intellectual exercises with which we solace the idle hours that we devote to thought, none is more engaging and at the same time perplexing than that of endeavouring to form a clear conception of the age in which we live. Naturally the difficulty lies, not in lack of materials on which to base an impression—indeed, we are embarrassed by the quantity of evidence that accumulates to our hand—but in the fact that it is hard to see things in true perspective when they are very near to the observer. The yet unborn historians of the present era will doubtless lack much of our knowledge; but they will be able to unravel in the quietude of their studies the tangled threads and stubborn knots that writhe beneath our fingers with the perpetual changeableness and uneasy animation of life itself. But if it is impossible to write dispassionately of a revolution while men are dying at the barricades, and musket-balls are marring the bland uniformity of the wallpaper of the room in which we write, it is always open to the student of life to fall back on impressionism. The form of art that seeks to bludgeon life with a loaded phrase, rather than to woo her to captivity with chosen and honeyed words. And the brutal method is apt to prove the more efficacious, as with that frail sex that kisses, so I am told, the masculine hand that grants the accolade of femininity in that blessed state of bruiser and bruised that is Nature's highest conception of the

relationship of the two sexes. While science greets the corpse with incomprehensible formulæ and the conscientious artist gropes for his note-book of epithets to suit occasions, impressionism stops her dainty nose with her diminutive square of perfumed silk, and the dog is dead indeed.

We are all born impressionists, and it takes the education of years to eradicate the gift from our natures. Many people never lose the habit of regarding life in this queer straightforward fashion, and go to their graves obstinately convinced that grass is green and the sky is blue in dogged opposition to the scientists, didactic dramatists, eminent divines, philosophers, æsthetic poets, and human beings born blind. Some of these subtle weavers of argument would have us believe that impressionism means just the converse of the sense in which I am using the word; that, for instance, the fact that grass is green comes to us from indirect sources, as that of our own natures we would perceive it to be red or blue. But while we believe our impression to be our own, we know that this theory has reached us indirectly, so we can well afford to ignore it. Others, again, will have it that impressions are not to be trusted; and the majority of people, while rejecting or failing to comprehend the philosophic basis on which this doubt is founded, are only too willing to accept a theory that relieves them in some way of responsibility for their own individual actions. As a matter of fact, telling a man to mistrust his impressions is like bidding a mariner despise his compass. If our senses lie to us, we must live, perforce, in a world of lies.

But as I hinted above, the young are wont to rely on their impressions from the moment when a baby first parts its lips in howling criticism of life. Children

have implicit faith in the evidence of their senses until the grown-up people come along and tell grimy stories of perjured eyes and lying ears, and the unhappy fate of the unwise babes who trusted them. What is a child to do? Usually it accepts the new theory of its own inherent blindness and deafness grudgingly, but it accepts it nevertheless. It begins to rely on the experience of older human beings, as if the miracle of its own life were no more than the toneless repetition of other lives that have been before it. Wonder passes from its life, as joy passes from pencil and paper when the little fingers are made to follow certain predestined lines, instead of tracing the fancies of the moon. The child becomes sensible, obedient, quick at its lessons. It learns the beauty of the world from pictures and the love of its mother from books. In course of time its senses become atrophied through disuse, and it can, in truth, no longer see or hear. When this stage is reached the education of the individual is completed, and all civilisation's requirements are satisfied.

I have described an extreme case, and the judicious reader will realise that the process is rarely completed in so short a time as the last paragraph suggests. But sooner or later most men and women come to believe in experience, and to this belief is due our tyrannous treatment of the young. I can conceive that an age will come that will shrink with horror from the excesses we commit in the name of education; will regard us who force children to do their lessons against their will, very much in the way in which we regard the slave-owners of the past, only with added indignation that our tyranny is imposed on the children's minds, and not on the bodies of adults. Let those conservative readers who find this comparison a little strained reflect for a

moment on what it is that we have to teach the next generation, with what manner of wisdom we chain the children's imaginations and brand their minds. We teach them in the first place to express themselves in sounds that shall be intelligible to us, and this, I suppose, is necessary, though I should like to doubt it. Further, we invariably instruct them in the sciences of reading and writing, which seems to me frankly unfortunate.

In Utopia, as I conceive it, the child who thought there was anything worth reading would teach itself to read, as many children have done before it, and in the same way the rarer child who desired to express itself on paper would teach itself to write. That any useful purpose is served by the general possession of this knowledge I cannot see. Even civilisation cannot rejoice that her children are able to read the Sunday newspapers and scrawl gutter sentiments on the walls of churches.

Beyond this we teach children geography, which robs the earth of its charm of unexpectedness and calls beautiful places by ugly names; history, which chronicles inaccurate accounts of unimportant events in the ears of those who would be better employed in discovering the possibilities of their own age; arithmetic, which encourages the human mind to set limits to the infinite; botany, which denotes the purposeless vivisection of flowers; chemistry, which is no more than an indelicate unveiling of matter; and a hundred other so-called arts and sciences, which, when examined without prejudice, will be found to have for their purpose the standardisation and ultimate belittlement of life.

In Utopia, the average human being would not know how to read or write, would have no knowledge of the past, and would know no more about life and the world

in general than he had derived from his own impressions. The sum of those impressions would be the measure of his wisdom, and I think that the chances are that he would be a good deal less ignorant than he is now, when his head is full of confused ideas borrowed from other men and only half-comprehended. I think that our system of education is bad, because it challenges the right of the individual to think constructively for himself. In rustic families, where the father and mother never learn to read, and the children have had the advantages of "scholarship," the illiterate generation will always be found to have more intelligence than their educated descendants. The children were learning French and arithmetic when they should have been learning life.

And, after all, this is the only kind of education that counts. We all know that a man's knowledge of Latin or the use of the globes does not affect his good-fellowship, or his happiness, or even the welfare of the State as a whole. What is important is, that he should have passed through certain experiences, felt certain emotions, and dreamed certain dreams, that give his personality the stamp of a definite individual existence. Tomlinson, the book-made man, with his secondhand virtues and secondhand sins, is of no use to any one. Yet while we all realise this, we still continue to have a gentle, unreasoning faith in academic education; we still hold that a man should temper his own impressions with the experience of others.

STREET-ORGANS

RICHARD MIDDLETON: *The Day Before Yesterday*

IT is very true, as Mr. Chesterton must have remarked somewhere, that the cult of simplicity is one of the most complex inventions of civilisation. To eat nuts in a meadow when you can eat a beefsteak in a restaurant is neither simple nor primitive; it is merely perverse, in the same way that the art of Gaugin is perverse. A shepherd-boy piping to his flock in Arcady and a poet playing the penny whistle in a Soho garret may make the same kind of noise; but whereas the shepherd-boy knows no better, the poet has to pretend that he knows no better. So I reject scornfully the support of those amateurs who profess to like street-organs because they are the direct descendants of the itinerant ballad-singers of the romantic past; or because they represent the simple musical tastes of the majority to-day. I refuse to believe that in appreciating the sound of the complex modern instruments dragged across London by Cockneys disguised as Italians the soul of the primitive man who lurks in some dim oubliette of everybody's consciousness is in any way comforted. I should imagine that that poor prisoner, if civilisation's cruelty has not deprived him of the faculty of hearing, is best pleased by such barbaric music as the howling of the wind or the sound of railway-engines suffering in the night; and indeed everyone must have noticed that sometimes certain sounds unmusical in themselves can arouse the same emotions as the greatest music.

But it is not on this score that street-organs escape our condemnation; their music has certain defects that even distance cannot diminish, and they invariably give us the impression of a man speaking through his nose in a high-pitched voice, without ever pausing to take breath. If, in spite of this, we have a kindness for them, it is because of their association with the gladdest moments of childhood. To the adult ear they bring only desolation and distraction, but to the children the organ-man, with his curly black hair and his glittering earrings, seems to be trailing clouds of glory. For them the barrel-organ combines the merits of Wagner, Beethoven, Strauss, and Debussy, and Orpheus would have to imitate its eloquent strains on his lute if he wished to captivate the hearts of London children.

When I was a child the piano-organ and that terrible variant that reproduces the characteristic stutter of the mandoline with deadly fidelity were hardly dreamed of, but the ordinary barrel-organ and the prehistoric hurdy-gurdy, whose quavering notes suggested senile decay, satisfied our natural craving for melody. It is true that they did not make so much noise as the modern instruments, but in revenge they were almost invariably accompanied by a monkey in a little red coat or a performing bear. I always had a secret desire to turn the handle of the organ myself; and when—too late in life to enjoy the full savour of the feat—I persuaded a wandering musician to let me make the experiment, I was surprised to find that it is not so easy as it looks to turn the handle without jerking it, and that the arm of the amateur is weary long before the repertoire of the organ is exhausted. It is told of Mascagni that he once taught an organ-man how to play his notorious Intermezzo to the fullest effect; but I fancy that in

professional circles the story would be discredited, for the arm of the practised musician acquires by force of habit a uniform rate of revolution, and in endeavouring to modify that rate he would lose all control over his instrument.

Personally, I do not like hearing excerpts from Italian opera on the street-organs, because that is not the kind of music that children can dance to, and it is, after all, in supplying an orchestra for the ballroom of the street that they best justify their existence. The spectacle of little ragged children dancing to the music of the organ is the prettiest and merriest and saddest thing in the world. In France and Belgium they waltz; in England they have invented a curious compound of the reel, the gavotte, and the cakewalk. The best dancers in London are always little Jewesses, and it is worth anybody's while to go to Whitechapel at midday to see Miriam dancing on the cobbles of Stoney Lane. There is not, as I once thought, a thwarted enchanter shut up inside the street-organs who cries out when the handle turns in the small of his back. But why is it that I feel instinctively that magicians have drooping moustaches and insinuating smiles, if it is not that my mind as a child founded its conceptions of magicians on itinerant musicians? And they weave powerful spells, strong enough to make these poor little atomies forget their birthright of want and foot it like princesses. Children approach their amusements with a gravity beside which the work of a man's life seems deplorably flippant. A baby toddling round a bandstand is a far more impressive sight than a grown man circumnavigating the world, and children do not smile when they dance—all the laughter is in their feet.

When from time to time "brain-workers" write to

the newspapers to suggest that street musicians should be suppressed I feel that the hour has almost come to start a movement in favour of Votes for Children. It is disgraceful, ladies and gentlemen, that this important section of the community, on whom the whole future of the nation depends, should have no voice in the forming of the nation's laws! This question of street-organs cannot be solved by banishing them to the slums without depriving many children of a legitimate pleasure. For, *sub rosa*, the children of Park Lane—if there are any children in Park Lane—and even the children of "brain-workers," appreciate the music of street-organs quite as much as their humble contemporaries. While father buries his head under the sofa cushions and composes furious letters to the *Times* in that stuffy hermitage, little noses are pressed against the window-pane, little hands applaud, and little feet beat time on the nursery floor upstairs. This is one of those situations where it is permissible to sympathise with all parties, and unless father can achieve an almost inhuman spirit of tolerance I see no satisfactory solution.

For children must have music; they must have tunes to think to and laugh to, and live to. Funeral marches to the grave are all very well for the elderly and disillusioned, but youth must tread a more lively measure. And this music should come like the sunshine in winter, surprisingly, at no fixed hour, as though it were a natural consequence of life. One of the gladdest things about the organ-man in our childhood was the unexpectedness of his coming. Life would be dragging a little in schoolroom circles, when suddenly we would hear the organ clearing its throat as it were; we would all run to the window to wave our hands to the smiling

musician, and shout affectionate messages to his intelligent monkey, who caught our pennies in his little pointed cap. In those days we had all made up our minds that when we grew up we would have an organ and a monkey of our own. I think it is rather a pity that with age we forget these lofty resolutions of our childhood. I have formed a conception of the ideal street-organist that would only be fulfilled by some one who had realised the romance of that calling in their youth.

How often, when the children have been happiest and the dance has been at its gayest, I have seen the organ-man fold music's wings and move on to another pitch in search of pennies! I should like to think that it is a revolt against this degraded commercialism that inspires the protests of the critics of street music. The itinerant musician who believed in art for art's sake would never move on so long as he had an appreciative audience; and sometimes, though I am afraid this would be the last straw to the "brain-workers," he would arrive at two o'clock in the morning, and the children, roused from their sleep, would hear Pan piping to his moonlit flocks, and would believe that they were still in the pleasant country of dreams.

A GOLDEN AGE

H. J. Massingham

On the slopes and wide plateau of Mendip hedgerows are largely replaced by walls of limestone, which run down from the wildest uplands where, with the barrows and the ancient trackways, they are the only clues to the existence of man, down into the villages and towns of the valleys. The same stone wall on which the blackbird swings up his tail among the red valerian in the cathedral close serves as a parapet for the wheatear to look five miles away into the cluster of warm roofs and towers below him. How odd, when I had wandered by these walls, to think that our wall-tradition is of Pyramus shut off from Thisbe, of seclusion and exclusion, and when the last too violently resents the first, of arms. For here are miles and miles of wilding gardens, where all the garrisons are flowers and under their colours stand displayed. Down from hill to vale the sweet militia pours, and the very beaus and misses of Arcadian gardens proper in the villages and towns plot a truancy with birds and winds, cast off gentility and join the rout.

But the regiments of Marvell's day carry other associations than do ours, and the flowers of Mendip walls remind me of military marches no more than those of garden society, once run away, betray their former state. They revert; they shake off their discipline for good and all, and once on the wall among bedfellows, liverworts, mosses and lichens, of an eccentric new-old

world, the plant-griffins and unicorns of the dimmed cryptogamous order, they go travelling along the ancient track of their own childhood, of what they were before man civilised them and made them the accomplished young persons they were. Then a queer thing happened, for on their way back they came plumb upon the Golden Age. There with the cryptogams that met them from the other end of time and with the wild flowers journeying a different route into the same country, there they stayed and made a new and constant Society of the Plants, a federation based on a common home, and conditions different from those prevailing in garden, copse, hedgerow and pasture.

"Plough thou the rock until it bear," and Ploughman Weather with its team of frost and rain had been the first to take its share over the calcareous limestone. Then man took a hand again and where the wall was crumbling, mortared it from above with clods of turf. Dust collected into the fissures and crannies, the mosses and lichens decayed and laid down a thin vegetable humus, and then the flowers called in winds and birds and field-mice to sow their seeds on stony ground. Such was the literature of the new Society of Plants, its Book of Genesis in duodecimo. So was the new continent formed, discovered and inhabited, an Atlantis of the plants to which they sailed and flew in myriads, until the rock in the fairer regions was blotted out with their numbers, as our towns have blotted out the green earth. This was Exodus and Numbers. And in the jumping off from earth to their narrow eminences and in the settlement, something was left behind; a grossness part of the compounding of the clay, fell away from them and shrank them to a little measure. It was a magical lightening and release and they swung

on tiptoe from their rootlets as though every moment they would be off and grapple their fibres to the winds, as though in every flower of earth resides its own spirit, in its own shape and form, and this volatile essence it was which had materialised upon the tops and in the crevices of the limestone walls. Except where the walls ran through a town, there was little change of species between the higher and the lower ground. The change was down the scale of diminutiveness, and as the wall left the shades and mounted towards the open winds and sunlight, so did a plant upon it contract its leaves and blossoms, attenuate its stem and become so *mignon* that an elf could barely hide behind it. Here then was the Book of Judges. Those that survived in the struggle for a foothold were not they who shouted the loudest as in tropical forests and the modern cities of men, but who spoke best in a still small voice. The Stock Exchange clamour of the jungle, the rank upthrusting and the stranglehold, the deadly exhalations as from the bloody sweat of plants that fought and panted and trampled one another to reach the light, there was no such mad battlefield of forces upon the walls of Mendip, the fairyland perched up on its walls of stone, where the first were the last and the last first.

With what diplomacy, what nicety of artifice had they all insinuated themselves into their places and for their tiny gleams of beauty drawn their so modest wages! The crosswort, a kinsman of the madders and the bedstraws, draped shy coronets of greenish-yellow flowers upon the crosses of its four-leaved whorls, barely half their length. The stonecrops kept their own leafy cellars for the water-supply and their white, pink and yellow flowers close at home beside

them, while the rue-leaved saxifrage clothed itself in down to check evaporation, threw out into the air long slender pedicels to cup the dew and sunlight and topped them for the flies with single heads of minute white flowers, like the upright bells of the meadow saxifrage in miniature. The ivy-leaved toadflax usually chooses the side of the wall, pushes its sly laughing flowers of lilac and yellow and sometimes pure white out of the folds of its full, tapestried leafage all the year round and makes a hanging for the wall in sheltered places that hides it over. It is no aggressive plant like the dandelion; its mastership is by the harmony of all its parts and by a yielding adaptation to the contours of the wall. It is not even a wiry plant, for the undersides of the lobed, plumpy leaves are purplish and the same "slow stain" just runs into the stems, so that it has an appearance not of frailty but of softness with the delicate texture of a woman's arm unused to toil and showing the veining through the velvety flesh. *Linaria repens* has used a craftsmanly power in its sense of proportion and the adjustment of the leaves to seize and transform the light, none obscuring their neighbours, and so make a home of the wall's harsh surface. So each plant set itself not so much to elbow its fellow out of their equal heritage of the heavens, but to share a common blessing on a breath of moisture and a crumb of soil. Each of these floral animulæ, flown out of the plant kingdom and settled on the walls, turned over the small change of its economics and devised its livelihood in ways as diffident and as fastidious as was the dwarf habit of its foliage and flowers.

On the walls of the lower slopes, in deep lanes where the canopy of leaves overhead let down a trickle of

manna which the sun cannot eat all away, the cryptogamous family, once giants and now gnomes, had climbed out of a manless past. They too had squeezed through the needle's eye to qualify for their new microcosm, and fronds that once merely rustled when a dinosaur brushed through them sank upon the coping under the weight of the humble-bee. The bulbous buttercup and Jack-run-the-hedge beside them were now more rude than they, and heartsease and herb-robert, dwarfs of themselves, were tough and candid little beings beside their phantasmal grace. Their past was a dream so far away that all its hot reality was chilled. A haunted vegetation indeed, an Arcadia of the elves, who may well sing cool pastorals under the fronds of the spleenwort in a voice as thin as the rays of the moon. By what magic art does the tiny spleenwort, the commonest of all the ferns on Mendip walls and the most delicate, support its segments with a cargo of spores like minute furred caterpillars behind them — when there is no stalk? You seek and find that there is one after all, a black hair as out of a fairy horse's mane and invisible at a longer view. Less aerial but more pixylike are the fronds of the ceterach with scaly undersides of golden-brown to protect the spores, as though a tiger moth, the transport of elf-land, had rubbed off its scales upon them. The unassuming wall-rue, another Asplenium, pokes out two inches of densely tufted and clipped rosettes from the cracks; the tapering polypody unclenches its childish fingers into the world on the tops, and the varnished leaves of the young hart's-tongue, that outgrace the Solutrean lance-points of which they perhaps rather than the laurel-leaf were the model, droop their streamers from the stony sills. And mosses with vermilion flowers and

seeds like fairy honesty small one down into a world yet daintier than this.

If one kneels down and sees the etching of this unique flora upon the blue sky, gripping the stones with birdkin claws and insect tentacles and waving a design so finely cut upon it, one is drawn by very choiceness and particularity of the plants into distinctions. Myosotis, by its slender stems and downy leaves, takes well to hardy Lilliput and splits into changing, field and early forget-me-not, each a subtly individual variation on the myosotis theme. The field diminishes its stems but still tosses its blue lights in freedom; the changing clasps the wall with a tuft of radical leaves and lifts a stiff little turret of stem and erect leaflets a finger's length in height, with the little princesses first in yellow then in blue, as they grow old, upon it; while the early forget-me-not arranges its foliage about a nest of the minutest sapphires. So microscopic are they that the yellow rocket, no colossus among the crucifers, but sizeable, arches a single blossom like a sun above them. Each group of plants stresses its diversities upon the wall, and what the species sacrifice to size in common they pick up again in a more individual differentiation. Each species must brace itself to this a brighter world, and in so doing, in casting off some of its fleshier habiliments, becomes itself more truly. Thus the crane's-bills and the veronicas went each its own sharp way, and the smaller it grew the further it had gone along it. What could be said of such a universe of flowers when even the groundsel grew as Dürer might have drawn it?

"Mention but the word divinity," wrote Samuel Butler, "and our sense of the divine is clouded." What a crowd of deserters had climbed upon Mendip walls and sunned themselves in the golden weather! They

had got to a common bedrock, an exiguous pilgrim's ration of bread and water was much the same for all, and together they had to solve how to draw the bounty and bide the pelting of the elements. And except in the warmth of the villages, they had all solved the matter in the same way, by going small and living small. But as you walked along the wall and the lines of this federation of the plants upon it, more or less at peace with one another and accepting all the limitations of their pilgrimage, you could not but marvel at the infinite multiformity and variety of habit. These still small voices, yes, they all contributed to the same anthology, but in rhythms and collocations of words how different! And as I walked, the curse of generalities, those monsters and chimeras by which we are all cursed, seemed to drop from me, and, gladdened and refreshed by the darling modesty, the fairylike strangeness and particularity of this little world, it was as though I too had climbed upon the wall and sunned myself in a Golden Age.

THE PILGRIM FATHERS

JOHN MASEFIELD:

Introduction to *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers*

THE Brownist emigration, known to Americans as the "Sailing of the Pilgrim Fathers," was a little part of a great movement towards independence of judgment in spiritual affairs. The great movement began in the latter half of the sixteenth century in many parts of England. The little part of it which concerns us began in the early years of the seventeenth century in the country about the borders of the three counties of Nottingham, Lincoln and York. The Separatists were members of the lower and middle classes, who accepted the ruling of the Church of England in articles of faith, but refused her judgment in points of discipline. They held (in opposition to the Church) that the priesthood is not a distinct order, but an office temporarily conferred by the vote of the congregation.

Their attitude and action have been thus described by one of their number: "*They entered into covenant to walk with God and one with another, in the enjoyment of the Ordinances of God, according to the Primitive Pattern in the Word of God. But finding by experience they could not peaceably enjoy their own liberty in their Native Country, without offence to others that were differently minded, they took up thoughts of removing.*"

One party of them, under Pastor John Smyth, "removed" from Gainsborough, in Lincolnshire, to

Amsterdam in the year 1606. Another party organised in that year in the district of Scrooby, in Nottinghamshire, about ten miles west from Gainsborough, began to make itself obnoxious to the country authorities. This second party contained two prominent men, William Brewster, the chief layman, and John Robinson, one of the two ministers.

The members of the party were accustomed to meet together "to worship God in their own manner." Church discipline, which forbade their meetings, imposed a persecution upon them. Religious persecution that endeavours to drive a flock along a path is successful, as a rule, only with the sheep. It makes the goats unruly. The persecution failed to bend the brethren, but it gave them enough annoyance to make them wish to leave the country. The leaders among them planned an exodus to Holland. In the autumn of 1607 a large party tried to escape to Holland from the port of Boston, in Lincolnshire. At that time it was not lawful for a person to leave the country without licence. A large party could not hope to get away without the connivance of a ship's captain. The ship's captain to whom this escaping party appealed accepted the bribe, then, fearing the consequences of his action, or hoping to obtain a reward, betrayed his passengers to the authorities. The members of the party were sentenced to a month in gaol; their goods were confiscated. Later in the year, another party was stopped while trying to escape from Great Grimsby. Many women and children were taken and imprisoned.

The prisoners in country gaols were then supported out of the rates. The keeping of large numbers of people in prison, in idleness, proved to be a great burden upon the rates of the towns where they were gaoled.

The authorities who felt the burden soon became anxious to get rid of their prisoners. They released them and connived at their leaving the country. By August 1608, the whole party was safely in Amsterdam.

During the next few months, after some contention with the party from Gainsborough, a hundred of the Scrooby party obtained leave to go to Leyden, where they settled down to the manufacture of woollen goods. They were joined from time to time by other Separatists from England. In a few years their communion numbered some three hundred souls, among whom were Edward Winslow, John Carver, and Miles Standish.

In the year 1617, these exiles began to realise that Holland, though a seasonable refuge, could not be their abiding-place. The children were growing up. The parents did not wish to send them to Dutch schools, because the Dutch children were of bad behaviour. The parents feared that the children, if sent to school in Holland, would receive evil communications and lose something of their nationality. No one is so proud of his nationality as the exile. The fear that the colony might become a part of the Dutch population caused the leaders to think of travelling elsewhere. Guiana, the first place suggested, was rejected as unsuitable, because it was supposed to contain gold. Gold, or the prospect of finding gold, would be a temptation, if not a curse, to weak members of the community. There was also the prospect of danger from the Spaniards. Virginia, the next place suggested, was considered unsafe. The English were there. It was doubtful whether the English would allow in their midst a large community the members of which held unauthorised religious opinions. No other place offered such advantages as Virginia. The settlers there were Englishmen and

Protestants. It was decided that members of the community should go to London to ask leave of the Virginia Company. In September 1617, two of the Separatists (John Carver and Robert Cushman) laid before the Virginia Company in London a declaration in seven articles. This declaration was designed to show that the Separatists would not be rebellious nor dangerous colonists. It stated that they assented to the doctrines of the Church of England and acknowledged the King's authority. The Virginia Company, accepting the declaration, was inclined to welcome the party as colonists; but a fear, suggested by the bishops, that they intended for Virginia, "to make a free popular state there," caused delay. The patent was not granted till the 9th/19th of June, 1619.

When the patent had been obtained more delay was caused by the difficulty of obtaining money for the equipment of the expedition. The London merchants saw little prospect of rich returns. They were slow to invest in an undertaking so hazardous. It was one thing to subscribe money "for the glory of Christ and the advancement of the beaver trade," another to equip a large party of religious enthusiasts for an experimental settling in a savage country. John Robinson, wearying of the delays, tried to persuade the Dutch to encourage the party to settle in the New Netherlands. His request led to nothing. Early in 1620, Thomas Weston, a London merchant, suggested that the settlement should be made in Northern Virginia. About seventy other merchants offered to subscribe. The business began to go forward. A Common Stock was formed. Ten pound shares in this Stock could be taken up either by money or by goods. John Carver went to Southampton to engage a ship. Robert Cushman, acting for the brethren,

drew up an agreement with the merchant adventurers, or, as we should call them, the speculators. He agreed that all the labour of the colonists should be for the common benefit, and that, after seven years, the results of the labours (houses, tilled land and goods) should be divided equally between the planters and the adventurers.

Although some seventy merchants subscribed money, the Common Stock was not big enough to send all the brethren to America. The majority had to stay in Holland. Those who chose, or were chosen, to go, left Leyden for Delft Haven, where they went aboard the ship *Speedwell*, of 60 tons, which had been bought and equipped in Holland. On or about the 10th/20th of July, 1620, the *Speedwell* sailed for Southampton.

At Southampton, the emigrants found waiting for them the ship *Mayflower*, of 180 tons. She was a London ship, chartered for the occasion. In her were other emigrants, some of them labourers, some of them Separatists eager to leave England. With them was the chief adventurer, Mr. Thomas Weston, who had come to ask the leaders of the party to sign the contract approved by Cushman. As the leaders did not like the terms of the contract they refused to sign it. There was an angry dispute. In the end Mr. Weston went back to London, with the contract not signed.

It had been agreed that he was to advance them another sum of money before the ships set sail. As the contract was not signed, the pilgrims had to manage without this money. Without it, they found it difficult to pay the charges of the ships and crews. They were forced to sell sixty pounds' worth of provisions to obtain money for the discharge of these claims. In those days, and, indeed, until within the memory of

men now living, passengers across the Atlantic lived upon supplies of food laid in and prepared by themselves. The Western passage was seldom made in less than two months. The pilgrims could not hope for any fresh supply of food before the next year's harvest in the New World. A considerable lessening of their stock of provisions might well lead to the ruin of the settlement.

About the 5th/15th of August the two ships put to sea in company, carrying in all about 120 emigrants. After eight days, the captain of the *Speedwell* complained that his ship had sprung a leak. The expedition put back into Dartmouth to refit. On setting sail again, the ships beat a hundred leagues to the west of the Land's End, when they were forced, by stress of weather, to put back into Plymouth. The captain of the *Speedwell* declared that his ship was too much battered to keep the seas. Though the man was lying in order to escape from the fulfilment of his charter, his word was taken. The *Speedwell* was abandoned, the pilgrims in her were bidden to come aboard the *Mayflower* to take the places of some who could endure no more. About twenty of the pilgrims left the expedition at Plymouth. They were discouraged by the hardship and sea-sickness, two doctors which never fail to teach the unfit that though many are called to the life of pioneers, very few are chosen. Among those who left the expedition at Plymouth was Robert Cushman.

On Wednesday, the 6th/16th September, the expedition left Plymouth for a third attempt. In the existing records little is said about the voyage; but it must have been a strange and terrible adventure to most of the party. The ship was very small, and crowded with people. Counting the crew, she must have held nearly

a hundred and fifty people, in a space too narrow for the comfort of half that number. The passengers were stowed in the between decks, a sort of low, narrow room under the spar deck, lit in fine weather by the openings of hatchways and gun-ports, and in bad weather, when these were closed, by lanterns. They lived, ate, slept, and were seasick in that narrow space. A woman bore a child, a man died there. They were packed so tightly, among all their belongings and stores, that they could have had no privacy. The ventilation was bad, even in fine weather. In bad weather, when the hatches were battened down, there was none. In bad weather the pilgrims lived in a fog through which they could see the water on the deck washing from side to side, as the ship rolled, carrying their pans and clothes with it. They could only lie, and groan, and pray, in stink and misery, while the water from ill-caulked seams dripped on them from above. In one of the storms during the passage the *Mayflower* broke her mainbeam. Luckily one of her passengers had a jackscrew, by means of which the damage was made good. But the accident added the very present fear of death to the other miseries of the passage.

The *Mayflower* made the land on the 9th/19th November, after a passage in which the chief events were the storm, birth and death above mentioned. On coming towards shore the landfall was seen to be the strange curving crook of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The pilgrims' patent was for a settlement in Virginia, far to windward in the south. There was no settlement of white people at Cape Cod. As they had made the land so far to the north, the pilgrims thought that their best plan would be to beat down to the Hudson River and look for a place near the Dutch settlement in what is

now New York. The crew of the ship refused to do this. Winter was coming on. They were not disposed to beat down a dangerous coast, to a doubtful welcome, in the teeth of the November gales. They told the pilgrims that they must go ashore where they could. Men were sent ashore to examine the land. On the 11th November, the pilgrims met together "to covenant and combine themselves together into a civil body politic." The whole party numbered 102, of which 73 were male and 29 female. More than half of the number had come from Leyden. The covenant was signed by forty-one men, seven of whom were labourers. John Carver was selected the first governor of the community.

During the next few weeks, parties of the pilgrims searched for a good site for the settlement. On the 22nd of December the site was found in the grounds adjoining what is now Plymouth Harbour. The *Mayflower* was brought into the harbour, and on Monday, 25th December, the first house was begun. By the middle of January most of the pilgrims were ashore.

It is said that their first winter in the New World was mild. It was certainly very terrible to them. Want of fresh food, the harshness of the change of climate, the exposure and labour in the building of the town, and the intense cold of even a mild New England winter, were more than they could endure. Nearly half of them were dead within six months. Among the dead was the governor, John Carver, who died shortly after his re-election to office. His place was taken by William Bradford. In the early spring of 1621, an Indian called Samoset came to the pilgrims. He told them that the place where they had settled was called Patuxet, and that the Indians had deserted those parts owing to an

outbreak of the plague. The *Mayflower*, sailing back to England in April, carried with her a tale of great mortality and the prospect of possible pestilence when the hot weather came.

The summer proved fine, and the harvest good. In November, by which time less than fifty of the original settlers remained alive, Robert Cushman arrived among them, in the ship *Fortune*, with thirty-five recruits (ten of them women). He also brought a patent (granted by the President and Council of New England), allowing to each settler a hundred acres of land and the power to make laws and govern. In December 1621, in a letter sent home in the ship *Fortune*, the settlement was first called New Plymouth.

The after history of the settlement may be indicated briefly. It is a story of the slow but noble triumph of all that is finest in the English temper. By honest industry and by that justice which, until the last two generations, usually marked and ennobled our dealings with native tribes, the settlement prospered. The pilgrims honestly paid the Indians for the lands acquired from them. In 1623, they were able to stop an Indian war, which had been provoked by some intemperate colonists sent out by Thomas Weston to a place twenty miles to the north of New Plymouth.

In 1624, the London merchants sent out one John Lyford, to be clergyman to the community. He was sent home for trying to set up the ritual of the Church of England. Another clergyman, who was sent to them four years later, went mad.

In 1626, many of the London adventurers were bought out. They surrendered their shares for the sum of eighteen hundred pounds, payable in nine yearly instalments. Eight leading planters and four principal

merchants in London undertook to make the first six payments in return for the monopoly of the foreign trade. In the reorganisation of the company the most prosperous men of the community were made stockholders. They were allotted one share for each member of their families. Each head of a family was granted an extra acre of land, and a title to his house. The cattle, being still few in number, were allotted among groups of families. Few laws were made, though the men sometimes met in General Court to discuss public business.

In 1630, when the second charter arrived, the colony numbered three hundred souls. After that time, its growth was slow, steady, and not very eventful, till the disastrous Indian war of 1676. In 1691 it was merged in the bigger "civil body politic" of Boston.

Emigration nowadays is seldom an act of religious protest, still more seldom an endeavour to found a more perfect human state. Man emigrates now to obtain greater personal opportunity, or in tacit confession of incompetence. When he emigrates in protest, it is in æsthetic protest. The migration is to some place of natural beauty, in which the creation of works of art may proceed under conditions pleasing to their creators.

A generation fond of pleasure, disinclined towards serious thought, and shrinking from hardship, even if it may be swiftly reached, will find it difficult to imagine the temper, courage and manliness of the emigrants who made the first Christian settlement of New England. For a man to give up all things and fare forth into savagery, in order to escape from the responsibilities of life, in order, that is, to serve the devil, "whose feet are bound by civilisation," is common. Giving up

all things in order to serve God is a sternness for which prosperity has unfitted us.

Some regard the settling of New Plymouth as the sowing of the seed from which the crop of Modern America has grown. The vulgarity of others has changed the wood of the *Mayflower* into a forest of family trees. For all the *Mayflower's* sailing there is, perhaps, little existing in modern England or America "according to the Primitive Pattern in the Word of God." It would be healthful could either country see herself through the eyes of those pioneers, or see the pioneers as they were. The pilgrims leave no impression of personality on the mind. They were not "remarkable." Not one of them had compelling personal genius, or marked talent for the work in hand. They were plain men of moderate abilities, who, giving up all things, went to live in the wilds, at unknown cost to themselves, in order to preserve to their children a life in the soul.

THE OLD SCHOOL

J. Lewis May: *To-Day*

Nos, ubi decidimus,
Quo pater Æneas, Tullus dives et Ancus
Pulvis et umbra sumus.

I was happy at school; but I did not know that I was happy. I did not know how happy I had been until the night of the leaving-supper. Then something knocked at my heart—something like the knocking at the gate in *Macbeth*. It was as the coming-in of the real, tangible world, after a dream. Only in this case, as I now realised, it had been a very pleasant dream. The men who had tried so hard, albeit so unsuccessfully, to instil some rudiments of knowledge into my wool-gathering brain seemed, even then, like figures in some diverting phantasmagoria; and now, as I look back upon them, they appear to me more shadowy, but more winning than before. But no, let me correct that. There are one or two who are not winning, one or two who inspired me with fear in those days, but who now merely strike me as quaint, irascible, comic beings who acquired curious antics by reason, I suppose, of their being shut off from intercourse with men and women of the world. But S—— was not one of those exceptions. He was entirely amiable. I see him now in his suit of dark blue broadcloth, which fitted his corpulent person like a sheath, forming a pleasant contrast with the red-gold fringe of silky hair that adorned the base of his dome-like cranium. There was never a crease, never a speck

of dust on that immaculate coat. S—— was remarkable, above all, for the striking conformation of his stomach part. As I have said, he was corpulent. But his abdomen was not curvilinear; it was rectilinear and precipitous, and over the precipice, swaying in the air, hung a prodigious bunch of gold seals. S——'s ostensible duties were to initiate us into the mysteries of mathematics, but this he had long since abandoned as a hopeless task. The morning he used to spend circumambulating the schoolroom, crooning to himself, under his breath, an antique lullaby—peradventure the song with which his mother had been wont to sing him to sleep. This, of course, is only conjecture. Certain, however, it is that, in the afternoons, he did sleep, and his nose was not seldom vocal. He did not, it is true, succeed in instilling into our unwilling minds the secrets of the binomial theorem or of those other strange mysteries the very names of which I never rightly knew, much less could repeat at this time of day. But I learned from him things more valuable than were ever contained within the covers of a Todhunter or a Hamblin Smith. From him I learned the virtue of resignation, from him I learned the seductive charm of idleness and the value of that most priceless gift of the gods, the gift of sleep. S—— has long since crossed his last lullaby and sleeps now, without rocking, in the bosom of the Great Mother. Peace be to his manes and peace to thine, little pompous, pedantic and amazingly erudite D——. I hated thee once, but all that is long ago. And yet you might have done me, and nearly did, an irreparable injury. I might have gone through life with as deep and dull and uncomprehending a hatred of Horace and Virgil and the rest of them as that which I conceived for those sacred writers under thy learned—but oh, how unimaginative!

—ferule. And yet, for all thy learning, what a simpleton thou wast! 'Tis because in some ways thou resemblest a little child that I comfort myself with the hope that thy harshness has been forgiven thee and that all is well with thee now. If only thou hadst not said, in accordance with that precious rule of thine, "down a place," when a boy dropped a pencil or whispered to his neighbour when his time came to stand up and construe, if only thou hadst perceived that the real reason of his delinquency was to avoid his turn, what abysmal depths of ignorance thou wouldst have sounded, what criminal lack of preparation thou wouldst have laid bare.

Would that I could portray the attenuated C—— who taught chemistry, or tried to teach it, but who was for ever telling his class, in a voice that sounded weary and faint from the altitude at which it was uttered: "Boys, you don't work, you don't work!" It was a declaration of sinister accuracy. Would that I could bring before you, in his habit as he lived, old G—— S——, the Alsatian, of the vast and pendulous paunch, like a feather bed, into which, as he shambled along the dim corridors, mischievous urchins would hurl themselves with the velocity of a bolt from a catapult. Withdrawing themselves from the soft enveloping folds, they would apologise with mock profuseness to the breathless and infuriated old fellow who, at last, so often did these "accidents" occur, adopted a lateral or crab-like mode of progression. And then again there was Dr. D——n, whose ability to maintain order amongst the gentle little lambs who formed his flock was in inverse ratio to his learning, which was accounted stupendous. You suffered grievous trials and have earned that silence and repose for which

you yearned so deeply but which, here on earth, were never yours. In whatever regions you now dwell, I hope no unseemly little ruffians murmur in an undertone: "confusedly dispersed," like the magic music in *The Tempest*: "D——n, D——n, D——n, you're a damned funny man."

And can I forget P——, whose mien was so majestic, who always moved as to the measure of some celestial music inaudible to coarser ears? With what grim delight he enjoyed the awe with which he inspired us. Imposing was his long grey beard, redoubtable the cavernous rumblings of his voice, but most terrible of all was his eye, that eye with its superabundance of white, that baleful eye that never seemed to shut, nor ever looked in the same direction as its fellow; so that, sometimes, when deeming yourself well out of his sight of vision, you hastily thrust into your mouth a surreptitious brandy ball, you would start with dismay to find that distorted orb fixed on you with a venomous stare.

How can I do justice, O beloved phantom, to thee, H.E.W.? How can I find words, not indeed to praise —that were impertinent, but simply to record your courtesy, your urbanity, your almost feminine graciousness! To you it is I owe such fondness for letters as I now possess. You it was who revealed to me the beauties that lie hidden in those signs imprinted on the sample page of knowledge and which, but for you, would have remained, for me at least, ever meaningless and dull. When we were reading with you, the past and the present seemed to answer and interpret one another after the manner of majestic antiphons. Was it Milton or Wordsworth we were studying—the great voices of classical antiquity would awaken again and resound anew in the verse of the modern poet. With you I

descended into the underworld with Æneas and Sibyl. With you I sailed over the wine-dark sea, and beheld the graceful shores and shining promontories of Hellas. You never made a scholar of me. That had been beyond even your powers; but you implanted in me a love of letters which has been for me an unfailing source of solace and delight. Like the old gardener of Tarentum, you tilled with patience and with ardour and with love the most unpromising soil and made it bring forth some modest fruit where before had been but weeds and tares. With love and reverence I salute thee, sweet and gracious soul. . . . But enough—I hear the old beadle clanging his bell in the playground. The twilight is falling, the lamps are lit in the street, the fallen leaves rustle drearily on the gravel, it is time to be gone.

Ite domum saturæ, venit Hesperus, ite capellæ.

Farewell, my masters, the night is coming, little kids, cut away home!

A LODGE IN THE FOREST

HARRY CHRISTOPHER MINCHIN: *Talks & Trails*

"IF you can tear yourself away from town," wrote the satirist, nearly two thousand years ago, "you may get a little house and garden in the country for what a garret's rent is here. You may hoe the ground and grow a feast for a hundred vegetarians. 'Tis something, wheresoever one dwells, to be master of the run of even a single lizard." The sentiment is still applicable and is shared by many. So, too, allowing for the changes of date and clime, the remark about expense holds good. That is to say, in the country your money buys you more.

But in our days it is not usually a question of being able "to tear oneself away." Hosts of people who would prefer a country life are kept from it by economic reasons. You may know them by the careful tending of their tiny garden, if they are lucky enough to possess one, by their gay window-box, or even by a struggling plant upon their table. Our big towns are, of course, too big. To Cobbett London was a "huge wen." What would he term it now? Old Babylon, London's prototype, was more methodical in its provision of open spaces than ourselves. Our civilisation has been at fault, as we are well aware.

Garden cities and suburbs are both excellent things in themselves, and will satisfy the aims and wants of thousands. But the real lover of country life, whose cradle, in Matthew Arnold's phrase,

> Was breathed on by the rural Pan,

will avoid them, because to him the loneliness of the

country is one of its most compelling appeals. A common love of solitude links ancient hermits and modern recluses; but whereas the hermit cared nothing for the scenery amid which he dwelt—from which indeed, as from human intercourse, he desired to be a thing apart—the recluse, in general, cares for it a great deal. O strange diversity of man's thought! That the beauty of inanimate nature should be in the eyes of one a snare of evil, in another's the raiment of Almighty Power!

Such a recluse, then, lately had his dwelling in a certain forest in the Midlands. And yet I wrong him by the term, if it be taken to include anything cowardly or selfish—and must there not be a dash of both qualities in one who rigorously severs himself from his kind?—for he was neither. He was a worker, and his work lay among men; it brought him, moreover, into frequent though shrinking contact with the sordid side of life, with mean motives and low aims. Circumstance and, it must be admitted, an imperfect resistance to it, had set an intellect which would have adorned the Bench to work upon the disputes of mediocre people in a manufacturing town. These he never really learnt to regard with professional indifference, or, at least, to turn the key upon them when his work was over. Instead, they fostered the tendencies to analysis and melancholy which with mental gifts of a high order were his inheritance at birth. He found no real relief from them in general society, as many do. It was a happy thing for him when he was able to combine with private practice a post which made him free of old muniment rooms, and brought him into contact with the members of a Cathedral Chapter. But in such company, though he could enjoy it, he could not rest; probably, he thought, because it took so much for

granted. His craving for solitude, when work was over, grew more imperative. His mind, constrained by long training to grapple with legal problems, reacted from them most readily to the speculative regions where it loved to dwell. He determined to build himself a retreat, where the hours stolen from business could be at least his own.

That was how the Lodge in the Forest came to be. Six miles separate the town from the Forest's border. How eagerly and how often did rapid wheels bear him over those miles when his house was building—how constantly and with what unfailing satisfaction when it was built! As you ride the meadows assume more and more a woodland character. Presently, at a sharp turn, you take a rough road between stone walls, and in another hundred yards perceive that on either hand is genuine forest. Half a mile further the foliage gives place to pasture. In the background are the ruins of a Priory, with an old farmhouse in keeping; these left behind, you reach, in a little, the philosopher's retreat.

It is remote, save for the farm's touch of pastoral, from signs of human life. It is built of the dark volcanic stone native to the district, which indeed, rising starkly in masses from the live turf, masses that the beechen branches only half conceal, gives the Forest an air of severity, even, when the sky is dark, of gloom. You surmise that this feature, reflected somewhat in his dwelling, was not wholly out of keeping with our solitary's humour. But if the house was a little severe of aspect, not so the garden. For therein, besides in his folios and his meditations, lay its owner's chiefest pleasure. In a few years he had made a rock garden which won local fame, though more people knew it by repute than by inspection. How memorable and

longed-for was the day when, with the advancing season, he could reach it before darkness fell.

In this refuge from his careful world he passed many an hour of quiet and renewing solitude. There among his flowers he seemed to overhear the harmonies of nature, too often blurred or drowned, for him at least, amid human activities. His wistfulness was here forgotten in enjoyment, his agitation stilled. A spell of such seclusion fitted him for human intercourse once more.

His hermitage possessed what those of old lacked, a chamber for a friend; and happy he who was bidden to occupy it. For this reserved and sequestered being had yet a genius for friendship. The winning of his regard was not quick or easy; but he who won it never lost it. Friendship, a word often, in our hurried age, too lightly used, was to him of sacred import. It carried with it responsibilities as well as pleasures. But, admitted to the Lodge in the Forest, it was of the pleasures only that one thought. For the host in him, responding to his friend's presence, bade all darker thoughts avaunt, and for that time serenity possessed his soul. While daylight lasted the garden held one; new varieties had to be explained, new blossoms praised. Then came the meal, in the Lodge's one living-room—a long, low room, with deep-set hearth, the home of his most cherished volumes and engravings—a simple meal, but fastidiously served. Then talk of old days and of new theories, of ancient ideals and present needs, accompanied by much tobacco; for as the smoke ascended the clearer and the rarer grew the atmosphere of his mind. Or he would take down a book and read aloud; something speculative, but, for choice, with a sting in it, provocative; such, for instance, as Bagehot's wonderful essay on the several kinds of poetry. How that essay,

with ensuing talk upon it, kept us from our beds! Even as we, with others, came forth of old from a college sitting-room to rising sun and piping birds, in days so distant yet so vivid. That is the flower of friendship, surely, to know one's heart uplifted and one's mind clarified by such converse—and to know that one's friends, also, are in like happy case. These are the hours of which one says, in after life, would there had been more like them, or would that I had prized them even more! At such moments the recluse's perplexities and questionings fell from him, while confidence, and even joyousness, usurped their place. Gone, for the time being, was that mental poise remarked in him by one who was his intimate, the poise as of a man stretching out his arms in the void for something that lay beyond —*tendentemque manus ripæ ulterioris amore.*

One may sharpen one's wits equally well, it is possible, with a new acquaintance, and yet only chill or fatigue oneself in the process. One may prove in hearty agreement with him, may find interests, even enthusiasms, in common. Is not this, we ask ourselves at such a moment, the old, the remembered fire, that warmed us through and through? Ah no, it is but the sudden blaze of thorns, which dies down as suddenly, towards which we stretch cold hands in vain. The companionship which such a friend as ours could give is and must be the growth of years, the outcome of common tastes, of shared griefs and pleasures. It is come by in no facile manner. Alas, that as years go on so much of the best that we have known becomes a memory! Yet in the minds of two or three who may read this retrospect, the old, true warmth may haply be revived—even though the Lodge in the Forest has passed to alien ownership, and will never see its master more.

OVER THE FELLS TO CALDBECK

(IN THE VEIN OF RHAPSODY)

HARRY CHRISTOPHER MINCHIN: *Talks and Traits*

IT is a fair cool morning of early autumn, as I come to a first halt upon my pilgrimage to Caldbeck. Surely no traveller could do otherwise, unless he were as pressed for time as those three gallopers from Ghent; for I stand upon the Terrace Road, between Applethwaite and Millbeck, for which Southey—how often did his patient footsteps tread it!—affirmed that there is obtained the finest prospect of Derwentwater and its mountain warders. Below is stretched the fertile vale of Keswick, from the singing Greta to the verge of Bassenthwaite; beyond it that exceeding lovely lake of Derwentwater—comparison with her sister meres shall be avoided—backed by Borrowdale, dreaming sombrely among its clouds. Eastward, across the steep fells which edge the water, the mighty shoulders of Helvellyn seem to challenge Skiddaw to a wrestle for pre-eminence; to the west is that amazing series of heights which Coleridge likened to a giant's encampment. May we not vary his metaphor and identify them not with the tents but with their owners, and exclaim with Browning:

> The hills like giants at a hunting lay?

The comparison is at any rate appropriate to-day, since

it is the memory of the mighty hunter, John Peel—what else?—that is drawing me to Caldbeck.

It is not true, of course, that "he lived at Troutbeck once on a day." That line was added by a later hand. Had Troutbeck (the Cumbrian one) been his home, a pilgrimage to John Peel's country had been easy, and the pilgrims more numerous, for Troutbeck is on the railway. But the village of Caldbeck, near which he was born, lived and died, is seven and a half miles from a station, and that station Wigton, which is not likely to be reached by any wanderer in the Lake District. That is why my bicycle must carry me over the seventeen miles which separate the famous huntsman's last resting-place from Keswick. I tear myself away from the Terrace, and speed onwards. As far as Bassenthwaite it is easy going. Resisting the temptation of a signpost which invites me to follow a rather doubtful and very narrow roadway to "Uldale—The Dash—Caldbeck" (The Dash turns out to be a brook, or beck), I leave the Carlisle road a mile further, at the Castle Inn, where hounds often meet, and begin over a roughish surface to climb a slope of uncompromising steepness. There is no help for it, for a shoulder of Skiddaw has to be traversed. The summit at last—and a disappointing view! Before me stretch rolling hills, mapped out for tillage, crying aloud, as such a region always does, for hedgerow timber to vary the monotony. On the right, however, is open moorland, and thither my direction lies. Down a long descent I go, for several miles, until I reach Uldale. Oh the sequestered village on the moor! Its loneliness makes one realise, in a flash, what to the Brontë sisters life at Haworth may have been! Another steep climb, no sign of cultivation now, only the moorland and the sheep, its denizens. At Uldale they have

told me to push on "reet ower t' top"; but ere that is reached I am glad to meet a dalesman, leading a horse to be shod. I am near the summit, he says, and shall have "a fine roon down to Cal'beck, two an a half miles, aboot." It proves to be four! No matter, one could hardly have a more exhilarating run. The long road stretches before me like a white ribbon straying over a green dress. Very occasionally an isolated farm is passed; one, sheltered by a few oaks and beeches, particularly takes my fancy; but between the dalesman and Whelpo, an outlying hamlet of Caldbeck, I do not see a living soul. WHELPO, by the way; it is a likely name in a hunting country! Yonder is a sleepy little cottage; THERE, surely,

'Twas the sound of his horn woke me from my bed!

On I go, and the rush of the air in my ears, the murmur of the beck, and my own thoughts all set themselves to the same tune. Exultantly, and as if mastered by some external impulse, I break out into the famous song:

D'ye ken John Peel, with his coat so gay,
D'ye ken John Peel at the break o' the day,
D'ye ken John Peel when he's far, far away,
With his hounds and his horn in the morning?

But here is Whelpo, and I must be silent. The first thing that catches my eye is a poster making known the Jubilee of the local "tent" of the Independent Order of Rechabites. I cannot pause to inquire of the antiquity of the Order, but in any case I surmise that John Peel was not a member of it. In a few moments I am in Caldbeck churchyard, and in a different mood. I find his grave readily. The grass that leads to it is slightly trodden, in token of the visits of other pilgrims.

The headstone is a large oblong, carved at the upper corners. No inscription could be simpler. "In memory of John Peel, of Ruthwaite, who died in 1854, aged 78: of his wife—who survived him a few years and almost equalled his age; and of three sons, of whom one died in infancy, one at twenty-seven, one, in 1887, at the age of ninety." No other words; but symbolical reminders of what John Peel was—sculptured there a brace of horns confront us, encircled with a brace of hunting-crops, together with the recumbent figure of a hound. That last is, perhaps, the happiest touch. For it seems to show us what tradition asserts and what I must believe, that John Peel had that understanding of his hounds which the true huntsman ought to have; that he was no mere Tony Lumpkin of the nineteenth century, but a complete sportsman, and therefore merciful to beast as well as to man; one, moreover, to whom the poetry of sport appealed, as well as its excitement, who loved the wild fellside for its wild beauty, as well as for its foxes. Look at his portrait (it hangs in the museum at Keswick) and the notion may not seem too fanciful. Note the wistful grey eyes, the drooping lips that yet are haunted by a lurking smile; a "man of humorous-melancholy mark": indeed, something more than a mere fox-chaser. How one regrets that, as it seems, he never encountered any of the poetic giants, his contemporaries, who lived the other side of Skiddaw! What would not Wordsworth have made of him, had he caught him in some happy mood and circumstance, the Wordsworth who loved to penetrate below the surface of his rugged dalesmen! What, have I forgotten then that Wordsworth bade us never mix our pleasures "with sorrow to the meanest thing that feels"? No: but I remember also that poets can be

as inconsistent as the rest of mankind, and that he has celebrated, in a manner as vivid as pathetic, the "running huntsman merry" of "the sweet shire of Cardigan," old Simon Lee.

Perhaps I need to be fortified by my idealised conception of John Peel. As I leave the churchyard, I see an old inhabitant seated at his doorway. Let not the reader think I have invented this person for convenience; if he goes to Caldbeck on a fine afternoon, he will probably find him sunning himself, as I did. And inquiry as to the way to Troutbeck gets us into conversation, and I find the old fellow something of an iconoclast.

"Ye've been looking at John Peel's monument? Aye, there's many doos. Might I remember him? Well, I were two years old when he died, so if I saw him I dinna mind it. But I mind his son, that lived to a great age; a steady man he was, and attended to his farming."—

"The father was a farmer, too?"—

"Oh aye, but wonderful fond of hunting. The farmers hereaboots were vera well-off in them days, and never groodged time nor money to sport. But let me tell ye this, that but for the song that Graves made on him, he wouldn't be remembered now! He'd be forgotten, as folks be when they get THERE"—this with a jerk of his hand towards the churchyard.

Yes, thought I, and Achilles might be forgotten but for Homer, but I contented myself with remarking that at any rate he must have been an out-of-the-way good huntsman.

"A good huntsman? Oh aye, na doot, but a better drinker! A heavy drinker, just as Robbie Burns was, as I said to a Scotchman the other day, who cam' to

see John's grave. Oh, but he was fair angry wi' me, the Scotchman!"

"At any rate," I urged, not liking this insistence on the frailties of the great departed, "he lived to a good old age, and perpetual soaking isn't conducive to that. I dare say he was too fond of a glass at times, but most people were in those days."

"True enough," said the old fellow, "and there was no harm in him, ye know. He never injured ony man. Aye, I mind the story of a trick they put upon him once. There was a tame fox at the 'Sun,' the inn he was most fond of, an' one day some of his freens took t' fox to a spinney they knew he meant to draw; and, sure enough, the hounds put 'en up—Ruby, Ranter, and the rest—and he ran to earth, as ye might say, in the public, an' there were two or three o' John Peel's cronies laughing at him, an' aw. . . . Where was Ruthwaite, ye ask? Aboot five miles from this, towards the Dash; ye must ha' seen the hoose as ye passed."—Ah, I shall always think it was that farm I noticed—"And the hoose where he was born, too, 'tis near it. I should know, for I have lived here all my life. Well, 'tis a bonny place, Cal'beck"—and so, indeed, it is, nestling cosily amid its trees in a hollow of the moors—"and quiet: ah, a bit too quiet!"

"You need 'the sound of his horn,'" I said, and so departed. But all along the fellside to Mungrisdale, where the air is full of the pleasant smell of peat, where tiny church and stark school-house look at one another across the narrow street; all along the broader road that leads to Threlkeld, and so along the slopes of Blencathra to Keswick, the same song was in my ears; the song that is sung all the world over, wherever the men of our race do congregate; the song that fascinates hundreds who have hardly seen a fox, much less hunted one;

the song which I persist in believing could never have been written had not its subject in some way towered above his fellows; the song that, with its haunting refrain of "far, far away," takes us back both to bygone times and our own earlier memories; at one moment gladdening the heart, at the next awakening the sigh, the tear it may be, for so much that in actual fact and in each man's own experience is gone beyond recall.

OLD AND NEW

EDWIN PUGH: *City of the World*

I

IT might almost be said that there are as many different Londons as there are people in it, since every one views it with different eyes and from a different standpoint . . . except, of course, the Cockney, who (tradition says) never sees it at all. And the Cockney . . . ? You see, he is as used to it as he is to the firmamental hosts. To him its mutations are as much a matter of course as the varying tints and changing cloud-shapes of the sky. According to his critics the average Cockney . . . but then we have settled, long ago, that there is no such monster in existence as the average Cockney! But if there were one average Cockney left he might retort this, I think: The things with which we are most familiar are always the hardest to talk about. The things we know best—the things we cherish and believe in—our most intimate hopes and fears and doubts—the emotions we hold most sacred—the strongest passions that actuate us—none of these things can we translate quite adequately into words. There is an undiscovered language. How, then, is the average Cockney to tell the inquiring tourist what London is like? He could as easily describe his boots or his mother. But if it be indeed true that the Cockney does not know London, in the guide-book sense, he can feel it in his bones, and he has perhaps a finer and keener

appreciation of its manifold phases than is ever to be compassed, even after the most diligent research and close study, by any other than a Cockney. Saint Paul's, Westminster Abbey, the Monument, the Tower of London, and a score other similar historic landmarks, he knows only from the outside, and yet knows as intimately as the farmer knows the surface of the soil he tills. When the Cockney is rushed through the streets of his native city by some country cousin and has London expounded to him, it is as if he were shown some foreign translation of the Lord's Prayer, or some other stereotyped form of words equally familiar in its original form. To learn that for the first time the coolest place in London on a hot summer's day is technically known as the Crypt, or that the Bloody Gate has bloody associations in history, is for him to suffer the same kind of shock that assails you or me when we are shown the counterpart of our own skeleton in some scientific museum. In effect this vast conglomeration of temples and castles, monuments and memorials, which is summed up in the guide-books as London, and which is the only London that outsiders care to know, is no more like London, as the Cockney knows London, than the holy mystery of his body and soul is like that grinning horror in the glass case. Thus it is that there are huge districts of London, mighty hinterlands, wholly unexplored by the Cockney who happens not to dwell in or near them, and that he repudiates altogether. These foreign elements offend him as foreign elements in his food or drink offend him. He feels very strongly that they have no right to be there, and since he cannot do away with them, refuses to assimilate them, ignores them. He is content to know that London is big enough and strong and healthy enough to absorb all these alien adulterants

without being materially affected by their presence in his body politic. At any rate he is not conscious of any change either in London or in himself, even when he is shown that London is very different from his conception of it, and that his complacent acceptance of himself as a typical Londoner is based on the illusions of ignorance. In his own words, the London that he knows is good enough for him, and he reckons that he is good enough for the London that he knows.

So, if we would snatch one more fleeting glimpse of esoteric London before saying good-bye to this roaring city of the World, the time has obviously come for us to part from the Cockney, at least for awhile.

II

Come then with me, eastward. The poor Cockney would assuredly not consent to follow us hither. For this is the haunt of the Heathen Chinee—not the suave, polished Chinese gentleman and diplomat of Portland Place, but the raw unannealed Oriental.

For ways that are dark and tricks that are vain the Heathen Chinee is still as peculiar to-day—though he may wear a slop suit of cheap reach-me-downs and tie up his pigtail in a tight coil and hide it under a sixpenny-halfpenny cloth cap—as he was in those roaring times when he euchred Bill Nye and his partner. The ways he trod then lay upon the sunny slopes of California, and his trail was blazed with the aces that he strewed like leaves on the strand. His tricks were vain in the sense that they could be rendered abortive by prompt resort to crude, violent methods of exposure. But since that time he has added the smug Pharisaism of

the West to his native stock-in-trade of old-age cunning; he has learned in suffering to eschew the tactics which Bret Harte sang in song and so held up to immortal ridicule.

For rogues, all the world over, dread nothing so much as ridicule; and Chinese rogues most of all. They cherish their dignity as old maids cherish mementoes of their girlhood. To us they do not seem dignified, but abjectly servile and cringing. When the London police—to whom they are pretty well all "known" in the invidious sense—insist on going over their premises, they salaam and drop their eyelids meekly, and are most becomingly humble and complaisant. They indulge in elaborate ceremonial and long-winded, flowery compliments, and use every other subtle means in their power to hamper and delay their unwelcome visitors on the threshold or in the public shop, whilst their confederates, working swiftly and noiselessly behind the scenes, are busily putting a better complexion on the traffic of the house than it usually wears.

Their dignity at such times—or at any other time—does not assume the guise of a haughty bearing or express itself in an assumption of immutable self-respect. No. It is enshrined in their hearts and is gilded and warmed and kept alive by their measureless contempt for Occidental stupidity. They would as soon think of insisting on it in the presence of those rude, brusque officers as of flaunting a priceless jewel in a den of thieves.

In England the Yellow Peril does not seem to touch us very nearly as yet. From time to time we read that the Chinese invasion of our ports is growing daily more and more threatening; and we are mildly anxious that Something—that indefinite Something in which

we repose so much confidence, and in the thought of which there is such ready surcease from worry—should be done to hold this vague evil in check in the moment that it appears to gain ground. But what we do not faintly realise is that the Chinese invasion began many years ago; that there is a Chinatown in London as well as in New York and San Francisco; that the vices of opium-smoking and bhang and hashish chewing—with their horrific consequences of madness and murder—together with other nameless vices that we never mention, but which are not so unfamiliar to our private understanding, are even now practised daily in the dockside neighbourhoods of our unwieldy metropolis.

The Chinese crimp thrives and flourishes, despite the strenuous competition of Strangers' Homes and Mission Houses, which, however, do very much to stultify his horrible proclivities. The crimp himself is often a man of some education. In his own country he would belong to that limited social circle which may be said to correspond to our own predominant Middle Class. He preys not only on his own fellow-countrymen, but on whomsoever else he can beguile into his clutches. You will find under his roof men of many races and shades of colour, from dusky Zanzibars to lemon-tinted Lascars. Occasionally you will find a white man—or rather, a man who was once white, but who has rapidly sunk to the level of the lowest type of Asiatic, alike as to his morals and the hue of his filthy hide.

The majority of those lodging-houses, be they kept by crimps or by acceptably honest men, have shops on the ground floor. Some of these shops are open and display strange wares, the nature and use of which no Europeans may discover. The name of the proprietor is painted above the shop-front—and usually on a big

lamp pendant over the pavement besides—in English characters and repeated in Chinese. But most of the shops are closed and shuttered, as if the houses to which they belong were empty. If, however, you linger in their vicinity for awhile you will see soft-footed, stealthily stepping Orientals glide in and out of the doors, which are not locked, or even latched, but open at a push. Within these walls, in the dismantled shop, you will find a number of silent men sitting in the semi-darkness, enjoying their kaif, which is Eastern for *dolce far niente*.

They loll and sprawl on low couches and divans, or sit cross-legged on the floor, some chewing betel or bhang or hashish, others supine and blissfully unconscious in the throes of an opium-dream. The air is thick and heavy and faintly sweet with the odour of pungent essences, which nevertheless cannot quite subdue the sour smell of perspiring flesh. But all is seemly and quiet enough, however unpleasant the general effect may be to the various senses. And, indeed, it must not be hastily supposed that any save a very small minority of these establishments are otherwise than well-conducted—well-conducted, that is, to the extent that no open turbulence or disorder seems to take place in them.

All the same, most terrible happenings do take place in them sometimes. For one of the effects of the drug which these Orientals are perpetually absorbing into their systems is sudden insanity—not shrieking, raving, struggling insanity, but a cold, malignant, homicidal fury. The victim literally sees red. Everything and everybody appears to his distorted vision to be smeared with scarlet; and his frenzy takes the diabolical form of a lust after human blood. He burns to add more of that vivid colour to his surroundings,

with the result that he will, if not restrained, whip out a knife and run amok among his fellow-lodgers. By certain signs, however, his companions are as a rule able to tell when his paroxysm is coming upon him, and he is reduced to a helpless state by force. But whatever the outcome of his maniacal transport, it almost always leaves the stricken wretch for ever afterward bereft of his reason.

And there are several other forms of insanity which fructify in these dens. Many of them are such every-day occurrences that they excite but little attention among those used to them; but though they are not so terrible in their manifestations as the madness of the bhang or hashish eater, they are hardly less dangerous. It would be impossible to mention all of them, but in one of the most common the victim imagines that he is surrounded by jinns or evil spirits, which are fighting for his soul, and he is impelled to try and destroy them, preferably by fire, and to this end starts a conflagration.

But these immediate violent tragedies are perhaps the least of the evils which follow inevitably in the wake of the Chinese and their mongrel allies wherever they go. Even in the lodging-houses which are open to inspection the sleeping accommodation and the sanitary safeguards fall far below any decent civilised standard. And what the official eye is permitted to see does not by any means represent the normal condition of things. The average coolie, for instance, has not the least objection to sleeping two or three, or even four, in a bed; but it is open to doubt if the fact that this sort of thing goes on habitually in many of these loathly caravanserai is known to the proper authorities.

And even now nothing has been said of the card-playing, gaming, hocussing and terrorising, the thievery

and swindling, and—worst of all! the orgies of flagrant, unbridled immorality, which are the commonplaces of these viscous centres of depravity and plague. All these matters are hard to discover and abolish, even though the Yellow Peril be comparatively insignificant at present, and is moreover being fought by several excellent societies for the protection, salvation, and reclamation of the Oriental within our gates. But what that peril might become if, when more and more Chinese invade our ports, they are permitted to make their peculiar and incredibly nasty arrangements for squatting at the commercial portals of our country, is a possibility that hardly bears dispassionate consideration.

III

All this foul neighbourhood is known as Limehouse. And Limehouse, in the East End of London, is the place where East meets West, as we have seen, but never to intermingle. It is a region of narrow streets, the plan of which rather suggests a school-boy's attempt to draw parallel lines without the aid of a ruler. Brackish odours of the river at low tide offend the nostrils. Tall mastheads, rocking above the housetops, smack of vast ocean spaces in a way that no rolling liner off the wind-bitten Irish coast can ever hope to rival. Thus contrast will work in the poorest material and still prove herself an artist.

Here the wayfarer may rub shoulders with the people —men for the most part, but women and children too—of every race and clime and shade of colour: olive, yellow, brown, and black: Siamese, Malays, Japs,

Chinks, Persians, Armenians, Turks, Arabs, Cingalese, Hindoos. A mere bald catalogue of the types to be encountered in this immediate neighbourhood would be tedious.

Observe that this street is also full of shops—not an extraordinary circumstance in itself, of course; but the majority of these shops are closed night and day, as the Chinese shops are. The shutters are never taken down, but always barred against the light; and all along the upper edge of the lintels hang black, dusty festoons of cobwebs, testifying to the length of time that has elapsed since they were put up.

Through the misty pale blue twilight of late afternoon a man of a jaundiced complexion comes gliding swiftly, a peculiar, furtive, slinking litheness characterising his movements as he half runs, half shambles over the uneven stones. His garments form a queer compromise between the European and Asiatic fashion of dress. He wears baggy seamen's breeches, a shapeless sort of jumper open in front to display a sweater that was originally red and white, and a richly beaded tarboosh. His feet are bare save for a pair of straw-woven slippers, lacking heels or any trace of uppers beyond one small toe-piece, into which his big toe is stuck, the other toes being naked to the view. How he contrives to keep his footwear on is only one more minor mystery added to the many in which the Oriental is steeped from the prehensile sole of his foot to the crown of his shaven polished skull.

Suddenly this outlandish figure crosses the road at an oblique angle, thrusts his shoulder against one of the shuttered, secret-looking shops, and disappears within.

The door that has opened so readily to the Oriental opens just as readily to the push of my own hand; and

we are at once plunged into a murkier twilight than that which prevails outside.

The semi-darkness is slightly tempered by a few slanting lances of light that stream in through diamond-shaped holes high up in the shutters. At first they serve only to accentuate the ulterior gloom of our surroundings by pricking out here and there a spot of brightness. But presently, as our eyes grow more used to the sharp transition from pale blue to umber twilight, we find that we are confronted by a living reproduction of one of the wicked magicians of fable.

He is a tall man, wearing a faded white turban blotched and smeared with brown stains as if the stuff had been scorched, but otherwise arrayed in conventional English garb; frock-coat, grey trousers, boots, and a linen shirt. The mystery of this man's true nationality is impenetrable. He has a thick, black beard, and long, narrow eyes of the hue of a drowsy lion, set in a bloodless, livid face. His lips are a vivid red, and greasily moist with the juice of the betel or areca. Lust and cruelty and greed are in his face, and a hint of latent ferocity that all his cringing suavity cannot quite mask. He speaks, in answer to our polite inquiries, in a rapid jargon in which some English words, curiously mis-pronounced, recur frequently; and then he withdraws his evil presence and vanishes into the all-enveloping half-darkness which enshrouds us.

The atmosphere is stale and fetid. By comparison, the brackish savour of the air in the waterside byways is fragrant as the first breath of spring.

By this time we are able to make out, more or less clearly, some details of the apartment in which we stand. The shop and the parlour behind the shop have been converted into one large room. It is such

a room as you will not find in any other quarter of London. Ranged about the walls are beds and gaudy divans, on which men lie supine, or crouch huddled up, or sprawl limply, in every conceivable attitude of slack abandonment. There must be between thirty and forty men within these four walls, and not one of them shows us a kindly face. Their faces are of the type that haunt one in a dyspeptic nightmare; for, one and all, they seem to be as mere settings to the eyes. Some of them are not uncomely, or would not be uncomely if the eyes were not so unflinching in their regard. And all the eyes are dark; they seem black in this half-light, though we know, of course, that there is no such thing in nature as an absolutely black iris. Returning their intent, steadfast gaze, we seem to peer into deep wells—assuredly not wells of truth, however—at the bottom of which gleams a bead of moisture.

There are Chinamen in flowing robes among the crowd; and Lascars in dull brick-red turbans; and Japs, in coarse serge suits, jaunty and dapper; and scowling Malays, each with his hidden, murderous creese ready to his hand. It is a Malay who has just preceded us into this noisome lair. He sits on his heels before us now, upon the bare boards.

And surveying the scene, with its effect of purblindness, it comes home to us—as with a clutch of fingers at the throat—how all this heterogeneous collection of mortals has drifted together to this sordid London lodging, coming out of a world of romance and adventure and magic to plunge into a world of matter-of-fact. Or, more probably, our matter-of-fact civilisation may seem to these aliens as a heaven—or a hell—of weird enchantments, and their own far distant homes as the very prose of existence.

Still, in either case, it is inexplicable how these men can endure this self-taught squalor and gloom who were born to all the dazzling colour and gay idle life of the tropics. They have come from fairy realms of feathery foliage and flaming flowers, where bright-hued birds flit among the starry blossoms in the purple shadows of lime and palm, and brilliant flying things flash like jewels on the broad green leaves of the low-growing tree-ferns, or stud the gloom under the olives and myrtles as with glittering points of fire. They have come from a land where the languorous scent of frangipani and wild stephanotis, blended with a thousand lesser perfumes not less sweet, seem wondrously attuned to the endless, melancholy splash of sea-waves on a silver strand.

But perhaps this is only an untravelled Cockney's vulgarly conceived impression of the resplendent East; and their natural and inbred taste in environments may merely take the form of another kind of squalor and filth and vice, after all. At least they seem to take kindly enough to these frowsy delights, and are apparently content and even happy in their still, silent way.

Sickened and dazed, and a little afraid, too, the immobility of these Orientals and the unfaltering scrutiny of their unfathomable eyes having rather got on our nerves, we go out again into the darkening street where the gas-jets flicker, pale and ghastly, in the freshening breeze; and London, at its worst and most sordid, seems a genial, homely place after our brief experience of this Arabian night.

IV

The river lies before us. Let us take a boat and pull back to the London that we know.

This River Thames is the real main highway of London. Of the Thames it might quite truly be said, moreover, that though perhaps it has undergone more changes during the last thirty or forty years than any other outstanding feature of London, it has at the same time preserved most of its old characteristics. The two great Embankments—from Blackfriars to Westminster on the left bank, and from Westminster to Vauxhall on the right bank—which were begun in 1864 and 1866 respectively, as well as sundry other stretches of stone breakwater that have since been constructed at various points in place of the former low banks, have radically altered the aspect of the river along certain of its reaches. Yet what remains of the old Thames, especially between Southwark and Woolwich on the south side and Blackfriars Bridge and Blackwall on the north side, is essentially the same as it was fifty years ago.

Now as then, despite the Thames police, there are all manner of water-thieves and freebooters. There are still, for example, tier-rangers—gentlemen who silently drop along the tiers of shipping in The Pool by night and, having ascertained that the watch is asleep, climb on deck and help themselves to anything portable and valuable, even descending into the cabins sometimes and purloining money and jewellery whilst their owners are snoring. There are still lumpers—labourers who assist in the unloading of vessels to an utterly unsuspected extent, carrying off their spoils in fathomless

pockets artfully contrived in the linings of their clothes; these also smuggle goods ashore for the crew.

There are still truckers—smugglers on a more ambitious scale, whose business is to land more considerable parcels of goods than the lumpers can manage; and dredgermen, who under pretence of dredging up coals and suchlike from the bed of the river hang about barges and other undecked craft and when they see an opportunity throw overboard any article they can lay their hands on in order to slyly dredge it up again when the vessel is gone.

And there are numberless other special-pleading practitioners who, among other malpractices, especially affect that of cutting boats loose from their moorings and then salving them.

But certainly these brigands are being rapidly exterminated; and that strange, amphibious, slow-moving tribe of men who, even a few short years ago, seemed to be able to make a living by staring at the water and occasionally spitting into it, has almost entirely disappeared.

Yet still that queer, romantic atmosphere survives, dissipating but slowly. There are still the gleaming mud-flats at low tide and the ruinous, rat-infested old wharves and waste spaces, clustered with a miscellaneous litter of decaying lumber, whereon stand crazy sheds that a boy would give the rest of his life to play pirates in for one delirious afternoon. Until quite recently, before the London County Council got properly to grips with its stupendous task of reconstructing the capital, there were many waterside districts that were as so many Alsatian cities of refuge for the criminal in danger of his liberty or life.

On the brighter side there are still some penny steam-

boats; whilst the sea-going pleasure-steamers have increased in size and in gaudy magnificence beyond all possible foreknowledge of our fathers. And yet these latter vessels are essentially the same as they were in the days when Dickens described the voyage of the Tuggses to Ramsgate. . . .

It is still the same beloved, abhorred, horrible and fascinating Thames.

V

And the Temple is the same. We haul in our boat at the Temple Pier, and with reverent tread enter that most quaint and charming of all ancient fastnesses in London.

For among all the many quiet and secluded backwaters of human traffic in this City of the World, those best known and best loved, and most favoured of the poets, who have drawn their inspiration from the inexhaustible fount of London, have been invariably the Inns of Courts. And especially has their fancy delighted to play about the Temple. . . . The cloistral, gracious Temple, which still remains in all its outstanding features the same as it has always been.

Possibly the vista from the lower end of Middle Temple Lane has gained something in seemliness and beauty over what it has lost, in a sort of picturesque squalor down by the riverside. For where the high shining piles and gnarled balks of timber lifted their craggy contours above the turbid surface of the stream, or stood starkly on the iridescent mud-flats, gnawed into holes by the ravening teeth of the greedy tide, bent and warped by its ceaseless ebb and flow, coated

with the lichenous, rank rime of a myriad delicate neutral tints by monotonous years of storm, shine, heat, frost and damp, trailing sodden ropes frayed into a semblance of tulse and tangle, and festooned with chains and rings and bolts of a brilliant rusty red seemed to distil drops of blood into the sunrays . . . where these things fretted the prospect into ever-shifting patterns as they rocked and swayed before the wind, mingling their fantastic tracery with the leisurely heavy-sailed barges and gliding small craft, and at night or through an autumn haze got themselves inextricably mixed up with the shadowy human figures on the quays, or in the grinding boats at the precipitous stairs and slipways, where all this confusion reigned, there is now a decent ordered boundary of stone buttress and symmetrical railing beyond a placid expanse of shaven lawn, sharply dividing the stately old traditions of the stately old inns from the busy modernised Embankment with its humming trams and its intermittent buzz and whirr and hoot and jangle of motors, blended with the still persistent clop-clop-clop of horses' hoofs.

But upon these signs of inevitable change you can quite easily turn your back, and so behold the Temple even now as Dickens himself beheld it.

Wherein, then, lies the difference between the Temple of that day and this?

Then it was hand in glove, or rather cheek by jowl, with all the romance of adventure as well as with all the sin and misery of the waterside existence. Between the grim grey walls of the outer courts and the slimy higgledy-piggledy of the Thames foreshore lay close-packed congeries of dark alleys and black arches, sloping abruptly and by way of many unexpected kinks

and twists to the slippery causeways where lurked nocturnal birds of prey—a loathly, body-snatching crew. The Temple was cut off then from first-hand contact with the facts of life and death, as it is now; but with this difference—that it then enjoyed a voluntary seclusion, and had only to step across its borders to taste and see the raw crudities of poverty and crime. Now its seclusion has been made inviolate, and its denizens must boldly cross the Rubicon of the Strand to escape from its rare atmosphere of academic calm and studious peace.

And yet, for all its parchment aspect, it still remains an oasis in the desert of streets, as it was then, and testifies to the truth of countless poets' conceptions in regard to its delightful possibilities, by virtue of the lovers who continue to follow in the footsteps of those fair figments of a dream and to make their happiness upon its ancient mossy flags.

IL PULCINELLA

Cecil Roberts: *To-Day*

We were tired when we reached Stresa in the crimson flush of the August evening. The blue of Lago di Maggiore had taken on a darker tone, and there was night on the slopes of snow-covered Monte Leone, which looked down from ice-bound fields to the summer luxuriance of the Borromean Islands. We had just returned from the ascent of Monte Mattarone, one of those comfortable mountains which reward one not only with a grand expanse of famous ranges, but also with a feeling of achievement. Dinner by the lake shore of Stresa, in the Italian twilight, with the soft lapping of the lake water and the distant guitar of an itinerant musician, seemed a fitting close to such a day of wonders. With gratitude, therefore, we found a small hotel garden, the music sufficiently distant, the menu attractive — perfect that night, I remember, and the wine — but whenever did Asti fail to grace the board? And on this evening the waiter also suited the *mise-en-scène*. He had the black curly hair of a faun, with horns hidden somewhere, and there was almost what might be called the sylvan grace to his lithe young body. He seemed the familiar of things that lived in woods and mountain recesses. Anything might have happened with him there. He filled the little lanterned garden with an air of incredible romance. Once when he stood peering over into the darkness down where the half-dozen boats fretted on the margin, we hardly drew breath;

now might old Triton blow his wreathed horn, and the whole of us suffer a like-change in something.

There! What was it? My companion looked up. He had heard it and turned in the direction of the sound along the plane-tree-sheltered promenade where a dozen semi-naked children, belonging to the boatmen, scampered in the dusk. It was a familiar though unfamiliar sound, remotely connected with childhood. It permeated the purple atmosphere and that strange pantomime scenery of blue waters, crimson mountains and rose-flushed islands with a plaintive invitation. A moment later we saw the cause. Preceded by a rabble of lovely Italian children—being sunbrown they never look dirty—under the arch of the plantains, marched a tiny boy of some six years. He was dressed in faded red tights, that hung loosely on his thin little legs. His face was painted white, which made his smile ghastly in the twilight, and as he walked he tapped on a small drum slung across his thigh. Behind him, thus heralded, walked his lord and master, as great a contrast as human nature can present. He was a powerfully built Italian dressed as Pantaloon. His massive face peered over an enormous ruffle, and the strength of his physique could not be hidden by the voluminous colour-patched trousers that ballooned from his ankles to his thighs. To heighten the contrast, he played gravely on a long trombone. After them came a following of urchins shouting and crying shrilly with excitement. Suddenly, just as we became aware of it, and had turned in our seats, the procession stopped. A stillness fell over the crowd while the Italian played a long trombone solo in the gathering darkness. They were strolling musicians, perhaps acrobats, but no! for, the solo finished, Pantaloon began a long speech.

Distance and dialect defeated us. Perhaps it was an appeal for money? Repeatedly we heard the word "Trattoria." Experience, a continuous thirst and a taste of Chiante, had taught us the meaning of "Trattoria." These were the players, or some of them, and there was to be a performance at an inn. The speech ended, there was a profound bow, born, we felt, of centuries of tradition. The little boy beat the drum, the trombone again sounded, the procession moved off into the darkness.

"My friend," I said, "we have heard the veritable Prologue to *I Pagliacci*—Good ladies and gentlemen, a moment I pray you, I am the Prologue." But my friend was too excited to answer. The dinner was spoiled, the ice-cooled Asti could not hold him. We must see the players.

Hastily departing we tried to catch the procession, but darkness and a strange village of villainous-looking streets defeated us. Our only clue would be the noise of the drum sounded in a "Trattoria." Twice we traversed the town, peered in at every trattoria doorway upon strange scenes where dark men ate garlic and curly-headed children rolled on the floor amid hens, dogs and cats. Then luck rewarded us. A small gathering at the entrance to a long passage attracted our attention. From the far end came a babel of voices, children's mostly, amid a blaze of coloured lanterns. We entered, traversed the long corridor, and emerged on a scene that was not of this century. It was an inn yard, roofed in from the velvet night with a great vine that clambered along the trellis-work overhead. The thickness of the vine was such that no starshine penetrated, while amid it hung a few shaded electric lights (from a water-power source), which shone upon bunches of

lovely green grapes. The inn windows opened on to one side of this yard, their green shutters thrown back; in the open spaces were silhouettes of men, bare-throated and black-hatted, drinking red wine. The inn yard itself was crowded with small cross benches, just, perhaps, as in the pit of an Elizabethan theatre. On these benches sat about a hundred small Italian children, all chattering excitedly. I found myself wishing that I had the artist's gift of hasty portraiture. The children of Italy are the stuff of which great masterpieces are made; here were the infants of a hundred famous Madonnas. They sat there, half-naked, lovely-limbed, bronzed, with heads of black, flowing curls, dark lustrous eyes, red lips, and even white teeth. Their intense excitement heralded something wonderful and unusual, and the excitement passed to the fathers and mothers seated behind, drinking wine at small tables.

No, these were not the players, but something as venerable, the origin of many players, perhaps. This was Il Pulcinella, the real traditional Il Pulcinella from which was descended our own poor English travesty of Punch and Judy, the emasculated version which had found its way to England in the reign of Queen Anne to remain here for the delight of generations of children and elders. But just as we in England may not know the flavour of the peach plucked ripe from overhead, so may we not know the real Punch and Judy. We had stepped suddenly out of the night into the fifteenth century. The front of the Punch and Judy show was hand-painted, its drop scene being of a futuristic design, for all its age. On the tiny platform where the drama was to be enacted, burned two ancient brass oil lamps. They must have lighted these festivities for many generations. Quietly we made our way to an obscure

corner, conscious of being a very modern note in the whole scale of colour and romance. Humbly we sat in the shadow and asked for a flask of wine. At that moment a bell tinkled behind the curtain and the voice we had heard under the plantains began a long chant while the audience listened intently. It was probably the Prologue, in rhyme, maybe, the same Prologue recited by long-dead generations of showmen, inheritors of a great tradition. The chant ended, the curtain rose, revealing a hand-painted background of a street down which Dante might have walked. Then up came Punch, to be hailed with shrieks of joy by those children. Through one hour we sat entranced. Not a word of that carefully enunciated dialogue could we follow; the whir, the drollery, all passed by us, but we watched it reflected in the faces of those enthralled children, their faces puckered with laughter or wrinkled with commiseration.

When the curtain fell, ten chimed from the campanile, but somehow we felt this could not be the end. From his obscurity the showman came out, still in motley, and taking a guitar, his face illumined by the oil flares, he sang to us a ballad. It was very tender, and there were tears in the dark long-lashed eyes of the maidens. This ended, with ceremonious bows he toured the audience, hat in hand, reaping a generous harvest, with many "gracias." Then he disappeared, the bell tinkled, the chatter was suddenly stilled and the drama proceeded. It was the full, unexpurgated story of Punch and Judy. Maybe it had many current and local allusions; we knew not, but there were many characters unknown to our English version. The stage was crowded with a succession of puppets cleverly manipulated. There was the peasant and the king, the priest and the ugly

daughter, the stammerer and the soldier, the lawyer and the judge. There were tremendous duels with staffs, such fast furious duels and beatings that the audience rose to its feet and cried: "Brava! Brava!" and the children on the edge clambered up the vine trellis to get a better view of the agitated spectators. Eleven struck, again the curtain fell. This time we had no ballad, but the pale-faced little boy in red tights came forth. A short speech announced his tricks. He was a jongleur, and, held aloft in the hands of a brawny Italian, the thin little fellow, fearfully, we thought, performed his contortions, and smiled feebly at the applause. We were not unhappy when this was over and the curtain rose on the final act, more breathless, with Punch extricating himself from ceaseless complications. It was a quarter past twelve when the curtain fell finally, and not a tired face showed in that appreciative audience.

Leaving the inn, the chattering crowd, we passed down the narrow street, under the high shuttered windows and flowery balconies, and emerged on the lake front. The promenade was silent and deserted and we looked upon a scene of incredible beauty. The moonlight fell on the dark water, the dim outlines of the mountains, the distant Borromean Islands terraced with lights, and the lake shore fringed with white villas. On our way back to Baverno, the grass was jewelled with glow-worms, the trees faintly stirred in the hot air, and the wind sang in the tall cypress, standing like a Noah's Ark tree, the black sentinel of a garden or harbour walk. Across the lake Pallanza glittered, but not so brightly as the clear stars overhead. As we walked in the night silence, broken only by the incessant chirp of the grasshopper, we reflected that the drama

we had seen was a part of this land of beauty and romance, a cherished heirloom, faithfully handed down from generation to generation of these childlike people. It was the drama immortal. Three hundred years hence children bright and beautiful as these would laugh and cry at Punch and Judy; long after we had gone to the Silence. For Punch and Judy were not human products, as we, so mortal. We were really the show; the puppets had achieved immortality.

WINTER, THAT ROUGH NURSE

DIXON SCOTT: *A Number of Things*

BUILT out of the golden débris of his August holidays, your townsman's conception of the country is a queer, collapsible structure, run up hastily at the approach of May, fully furnished and equipped by mid-July, but coming down again, in rust and ruin, among the equinoctial rains. It begins with the buds; it ends with the last melancholy leaf; for the rest—greyness and rheum. A fall of snow, indeed, because it masks the true features of the earth, tricking it out like a monster pierrot, may renew his interest for a moment. But when February's dykes are filled with rain, he toasts his toes complacently in Tooting and thinks with a shudder of the land lying lean and wretched—a naked corpse if not an actual skeleton. Beneath his study window the little square of garden which makes a kind of mirror for the seasons, and into which they do try to peer as they pass, shows nothing but apathy and gloom. And he takes that woebegone picture for a true portrait of the outside world.

Dismal hallucination! The year never hibernates, March is never a dead March, and I sometimes think that the land seems never more living and alert than when it lies most leafless. There is a sense, and a very simple and true one, in which the end of autumn is like the opening of a great bronze door, and the scattering of the last leaves the withdrawal of a baffling curtain. For now, as at no other time, the strong drama of the

actual earth, the supple play of the muscles of the soil, is revealed to the human spectator. He sees the organic relation of hill to valley, the way the watersheds are welded together, and can watch the cunning dovetailing of uplifts and divides, the collaborations between woodlands and streams. The earth is certainly stripped—but as an athlete is stripped for a race, as a strong man for a struggle. It is not in the least like the denudation of poverty. Fold after fold the clogging coverlets of damask and maroon have been heaved aside; and now the living creature, all rippling muscle and mighty limb, bends purposefully before you at its task.

It is a great sight, I always think—restorative as well as stirring. The eye re-discovers, for example, the true meaning and movement of the roads. In the green smother of July they lay half-buried, shining but capriciously, incomprehensibly, disconnected hieroglyphics. But now the scattered curves link up, quick and consequent, from horizon to horizon; and to stand on the tiniest eminence is to see them forging through the land waves as logically and intently as an army on the march. They tack delicately to and fro among the billows; and you see, as plainly as the men who planned them saw, the problems they have to face, the distant mark they fight for, the exhaustless series of canny or audacious strokes by which they win their end. Similarly with the elder ducts: the watercourses, brooks, and rivers. If the high-roads, linking Temple Bar with Torquay, are the tingling nerves of the great body, the streams may stand for its veins. And winter, like a subtle demonstrator, displays them by a double process, exposing them with one stroke, neatly paring away the tissues that obscured them, and then, by a

second, dilating them, swelling them with rains. Treated thus, the gleaming mesh springs into sight as surprisingly as though the landscape had been suddenly slipped beneath a powerful lens. The refreshing fibres gleam in unsuspected places. The mysterious richness of a certain meadow, that used to shine out erratically on the general shield, a cryptic blazon, is at length logically explained.

It is this general rationalisation of the view, no doubt, that makes the wintry landscape seem so friendly. Certainly, at any rate, there is nothing in the least steely or repellent in this display of the stark machinery of the land, its undressed ligaments and thews. The earth is seen to be a reasonable earth, neither blind, nor brutish, nor incomprehensible. In the very kindness of summer there is something a little casual and contemptuous. We wander for ever among ambuscades and curtains. We are treated like royal children —kept in a noble nursery, fobbed off with pretty colours and rich toys, but never admitted to the council chamber. But now, in winter, Nature treats you like an equal. You are taken into her confidence; find with a reassuring thrill that you can follow her plans; discover, in a word, the kinship between your body and the original clay. The unmistakable stamina of the structure, too, is a kind of solace. Far more than the sleepy snugness of July, this unpartitioned prospect speaks of power and purpose. With all the unessential barriers deleted, and even the artificial subdivisions of the hedgerows half-erased, there is a general merging and co-ordination. "Views" melt into one massive surface, the deep rhythm of the land shakes itself clear of localities, its noble continuity is declared. We see the country as a pouring tide of plateaus, declivities, plains, flecked

with towns and cities—a tide that sweeps on uninterruptedly until it breaks at length upon the borders of the actual sea. England lives.

These are the larger, more panoramic issues. But they invade and vivify all the details. The little sounds of the season, as well as its wide views, display the same sweet reasonableness. Our poets, pacing their hearth-rugs, bewail the lack of bird-song. But those who really know the winter are aware that the very fewness of the voices gives those that remain not only a heightened value, but also an augmented meaning. They gain intention as well as intensity; so that the voice of a single thrush, ringing out through a February evening, will seem not only to fill a whole valley almost intolerably full of sweetness, but to shine out, on the grey background of the surrounding stillness, with an almost legible significance. Instead of the dear, indistinguishable babel of the summer-time we are granted the unentangled lyric of one visible, traceable bird. The music is no longer a ravelled rain of notes from secret sources. There, undisguised, clear, on the clean, bare boughs is the soft courageous throat, visibly throbbing. And the branches themselves display a lovely logic which their midsummer splendour wholly hides. Delicately discriminated on a dove-grey sky, every detail in a double sense *distinguished*, they are found to follow a perfect pattern, reticent as an Eastern print, yet as intricate as Western lace. They spire upward like fountains, shredding into finer spray as they ascend, but maintaining one consonant curve from base to outermost twig. Like fountains, too, they seem (as at no other time) to be spontaneous expressions of earth's energy jutting up through the crust of soil. On the costly landscapes which the townsman knows, the trees

are strewn like surface decorations, great green and golden flowers, detachable as flowers worn by a woman. But now, reduced to their elements, they are seen to sustain and complete the long lilt of the land. Thus, dark among the dark tillage, a single oak tree will bring the whole scene to a point, as with a conclusive gesture. And in the mass, clamping the hill-tops or mustered in the plains, the banded timber, as resolute as jutting rock, seem as much a part of the fundamental framework as rock itself. Yet it is not the earth's nakedness alone that leads to this effect of eagerness and intimacy. That would be a very incomplete notation of the season's charms which failed to take account of the special aerial drama of the time—the constant stir and release of soft colour, ceaselessly flowing and fading, filling the February skies with a delicate fever. Here, once more, our urbane misconceptions are remarkable, for we always speak of the shortening of the days as though it were a dismal decapitation. Whereas, in reality, of course, their brevity is the result of an almost passionate concentration, a quickening of the revolution of the hours, every episode in the play being speeded up in order to make it fit the shrunken stage. From the first faint silvery overture of the dawn to the deep *finale* of the sunset, the *tempo* of the day is heightened; and each phase stumbles on the heels of its precursor with an effect of blushing confusion. It is noon before the sun has cast aside the special colours of the early morning, and already, so hotfoot is the pace, he must begin to assume the livery of evening. No hibernation here! To begin the day's walk beneath the first twilight and maintain it until the stars begin to bud again is to feel that one has rather finely fulfilled the true round and tenor of the day. One need be no distressing athlete

to achieve it now. The petals of the dawn have barely withered before the clouds are clustering together again to construct the last crimson rose.

Familiar enough, to such a happy walker, the effect of all this celestial excitement on the empty fields below. In the shelter of the copses and on the grey grass of the pastures, the pure, pale colours, light as plum-bloom, melt and shift like the colours in an opal. The interfusion of early and late light suggests an interfusion of the seasons—the softly streaming sunlight of the autumn thrilled with the fresh passion of spring. Very beautiful are the days (we have had many of them lately)—the days of violet and misty gold, when September, secretly returning, meets May in the midst of the woodlands, the broken bands of sunlight streaming about her as she runs. Very beautiful, too, and equally a monopoly of winter, the days when the earth, mist-suffused, appears as frail as porcelain, no more substantial than the silken air, and one seems to move in the midst of exquisite crisis. Just a word, or a touch, you feel, would complete the spell or spoil it—dissolve the thin veil completely or set it tossing together in self-protective folds. And there are other days, not dissimilar, known even in the suburbs, when the horizons draw softly together, and the contrast between the elusive mist and the sharp outlines of the trees and houses create a queer impression of unreality and invest the simplest object with a strange significance. It is, perhaps, an old lane, or some reeds beside a pool, or a twisted scrap of thorn—but it stands out with a sudden poignancy, heavy with a wordless beauty. We may have passed it a thousand times before; but we see it now as though it had been but that instant created.

And as with the country so too with the country-

folk—the same new candour and cordiality. Wandering through the winter with a knapsack, I came last week to a certain little mid-England market-town (why conceal its name? — it was Stratford-on-Avon), known to me hitherto, as to most others, in its professional midsummer character of "Literary Mecca" and so forth. And now, for the first time, I find it living its own life, playing an organic part in the life of the county and the country, serving the surrounding villages, the villages of the Vale of the Red Horse, exactly as it did in Shakespeare's time. Revealing its own character, concealed amid the self-conscious flurry of the tourist months, in all manner of intimate artless ways. . . . And this deep change in Stratford's attitude is typical of the change that passes over all England. All the summer through, nowadays, the best of our countryside, from Kent to Cumberland, from Devon to Durham, is converted into a kind of brightly coloured channel through which the stream of holiday-makers continuously pours. But at the end of autumn, as at the shutting of a dam, the artificial flow is checked and the true tide of the country life resumes its immemorial course. There is no fantasy in this; the human change is really extraordinarily profound. Instead of landladies and apartments you find farmers' wives and homesteads; instead of being regarded as a tourist you are welcomed as a friend. As at the end of a ball, there is a general unmasking; and even the spectator finds himself discarding some well-worn sentiments. The footlights are lowered, you catch the players in mufti, and you discover that the people you had looked on as at players in an idyll are familiar men and women. The countryman is found to be a finer thing—a fellow-countryman. Perhaps, too, hard weather makes soft

hearts, and the cold a warmer welcome. Certainly, at any rate, *et ego in Arcadia* is just a sickly-sweet mid-summer sigh. Now, wherever you go, you will find something more enduring than an idyll; for every road you follow will lead you, before nightfall, to the door of a human home.

AN AUTUMN HOUSE

EDWARD THOMAS: *Rose Acre Papers*

On that October day, nothing was visible at first save yellow flowers, and sometimes a bee's quiet shadow crossing the petals: a sombre river, noiselessly sauntering seaward, dropped with a murmur, far away among leaves, into a pool. That sound alone made tremble the glassy dome of silence that extended miles and miles. All things were lightly powdered with gold, by a lustre that seemed to have been sifted through gauze. The hazy sky, striving to be blue, was reflected as purple in the waters. There, too, sunken and motionless, lay amber willow leaves; some floated down. Between the sailing leaves, against the false sky, hung the willow shadows,—shadows of willows overhead, with waving foliage, like the train of a bird of paradise. One standing on a bridge was seized by a Hylean shock, and wondered as he saw his face, death-pale, among the ghostly leaves below. Everywhere, the languid perfumes of corruption. Brown leaves laid their fingers on the cheek as they fell; and here and there the hoary reverse of a willow leaf gleamed at the crannied foot of the trees.

One lonely poplar, in a space of refulgent lawn, was shedding its leaves as if it scattered largess among a crowd. Nothing that it gave it lost; for each leaf lay sparkling upon the turf, casting a splendour upwards. A maiden unwreathing her bridal garlands would cast them off with a grace as pensive as when the poplar shed its leaf.

We could not walk as slowly as the river flowed; yet that seemed the true pace to move in life, and so reach the great grey sea. Hand in hand with the river wound the path, and that way lay our journey.

In one place slender coils of honeysuckle tried to veil the naked cottage stone, or in another the subtle handiwork of centuries had covered the walls with lichen. And it was in the years when Nature said:

Incipient magni procedere menses,

when a day meant twenty miles of sunlit forest, fields, and water,

Oh! moments as big as years,

years of sane pleasure, glorified in later reveries of remembrance. . . . Near a reedy, cooty backwater of that river ended our walk.

The day had been an august and pompous festival. On that day, burning like an angry flame until noon, and afterwards sinking peacefully into the soundless deeps of vesperal tranquillity as the light grew old, life seemed in retrospect like the well-told story of a rounded, melodious existence, such as one could wish for one's self. How mild, dimly golden, the comfortable dawn! Then the canvas of a boat creeping like a spider down the glassy river pouted feebly. The slumberous afternoon sent the willow shadows to sleep and the aspens to feverish repose, in a landscape without horizon. Evening chilled the fiery cloud, and a grey and level barrier, like the jetsam of a vast upheaval, but still and silent, lay alone across the west. Thereafter a light wind knitted the willow branches against a silver sky with a crescent moon. Against that sky, also, we could not but scan the fixed grasses

bowing on the wall top. For a little while, troubled tenderly by autumnal maladies of soul, it was sweet and suitable to follow the path towards our place of rest,—a grey, immemorial house with innumerable windows.

The house, in that wizard light "sent from beyond the sky,"—for the moon cast no beams through her prison of oak forest,—seemed to be one not made with hands. Was it empty? The shutters of the plain, square windows remained unwhitened, flapped ajar. Up to the door ran a yellow path, levelled by moss, where a blackbird left a worm half swallowed, as he watched our coming. A large red rose, divided and spilt by birds, petal by petal, lay as beautiful as blood upon the ground. This path and another carved the lawn into three triangles; and in each an elm rose up, laying forth auburn foliage against the house in November even.

The leaves that had dropped earlier lay, crisp and curled, in little ripples upon the grass. There is a perfect moment for coming upon autumn leaves, as for gathering fruit. The full, flawless colour, the false, hectic, well-being of decay, and the elasticity, are attained at the same time in certain favoured leaves; and dying is but a refinement of life.

In one corner of the garden stood a yew tree and its shadow; and the shadow was more real than the tree,—the shadow inlaid in the sparkling verdure like ebony. In the branches the wind made a low note of incantation, especially if a weird moon of blood hung giddily over it in tossing cloud. To noonday the ebony shadow was as lightning to night. Towards this tree the many front windows guided the sight; and beyond, a deep valley was brimmed with haze that just exposed

the tree-tops to the play of the sunset's last random fires. To the left, the stubborn leaves of an oak wood soberly burned like rust, among accumulated shadow. To the right, the woods on a higher slope here and there crept out of the haze, like cloud, and received a glory, so that the hill was by this touch of the heavens exaggerated. And still the sound of waters falling among trees. Quite another scene was discovered by an ivy-hidden oriel, lit by ancient light, immortal light travelling freely from the sunset, and from the unearthly splendour that succeeds. There the leaves were golden for half a year upon the untempestuous oaks in that sunken land. The tranquillity, the fairness, the unseasonable hues, were melancholy: that is to say, joy was here under strange skies; sadness was fading into joy, joy into sadness, especially when we looked upon this gold, and heard the dark sayings of the wind in far-off woods, while these were still. Many a time and oft was the forest to be seen, when the chillest rain descended, fine and hissing,—seen standing like enchanted towers, amidst it all, untouched and aloof, as in a picture. But when the sun had just disappeared red-hot in the warm, grey, still eventide, and left in the west a fiery tissue of wasting cloud, when the gold of the leaves had an April freshness, in a walk through the sedate old elms there was "a fallacy of high content."

Several roses nodded against the grey brick, as if all that olden austerity was expounded by the white blossoms that emerged from it, like water magically struck from the rock of the wilderness. In the twilight silence the rose petals descended. So tender was the air, they lay perfect on the grass, and caught the moonlight.

In ways such as these the mansion spoke. For the

house had a characteristic personality. Strangely out of keeping with the trees, it grew incorporate with them by night. Behold it, as oft we did, early in the morning, when a fiery day was being born in frost, and neither wing nor foot was abroad, and it was clothed still in something of midnight; then its shadows were homes of awful thoughts; you surmised who dwelt therein. Long after the sun was gay, the house was sombre, unresponsive to the sky, with a Satanic gloom.

The forest and meadow flowers were rooted airily in the old walls. The wildest and delicatest birds had alighted on the trees.

Things inside the house were contrasted with the lugubrious wall as with things without. The hangings indeed were sad, with a design of pomegranates; but the elaborate silver candelabra dealt wonderfully with every thread of light entering contraband. One braided silver candlestick threw white flame into the polished oaken furniture, and thence by rapid transit to the mirror. An opening door would light the apartment as lightning. Under the lights at night the shadowy concaves of the candelabra caught streaked reflections from the whorls of silver below. The Holy Grail might have been floating into the room when a white linen cloth was unfolded, dazzling the eyes.

In the upper rooms, the beds (and especially that one which owned the falcon's eye of an oriel)—the beds, with their rounded balmy pillows, and unfathomable eider-down that cost much curious architecture to shape into a trap for weary limbs, were famous. All the opiate influence of the forest was there. Perhaps the pillow was daily filled with blossoms that whisper softliest of sleep. There were perfumes in the room quite inexplicable. Perhaps they had outlived the flowers

that bore them ages back, flowers now passed away from the woods. The walls were faded blue; the bed canopy a combination of three gold and scarlet flags crossed by a device in scarlet and gold: "Blessed is he that sleepeth well, but he that sleeps here is twice blessed."

The whole room was like an apse, with altar, and pure, hieratic ornament. To sleep there was a sacramental thing. Such dreams we had.

Against that window were flowers whose odour the breeze carried to our nostrils when it puffed at dawn. If excuses could be found, it was pleasant to be early abed in summer, for the sake of that melancholy western prospect, when the songs of the lark and the nightingale arose together. We fell suddenly asleep with a faint rush of the scent of juniper in the room, and the light still fingering the eyelashes. Or, if we closed the window in that chamber—

That chamber deaf of noise and blind of sight—

we could hear our own thoughts. Moreover, there was a graceful usage of making music while the owl hooted vespers; for a bed without music is a sty, the host used to say,—as the philosopher called a table without a manger.

Alongside the bed, and within reach of the laziest hand, ran two shelves of books. One shelf held an old *Montaigne*; the *Lyrical Ballads*; the *Morte d'Arthur*; *The Compleat Angler*; Lord Edward Herbert's *Autobiography*; George Herbert's *Temple*; Browne's *Urn Burial*; Cowper's *Letters*. The other shelf was filled by copies, in a fine feminine hand and charmingly misspelt, of the long-dead hostess's favourites, all bound according to her fancy by herself: Keats' *Odes*; *Twelfth*

Night; *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*; the *Twenty-first Chapter of St. John* and the *Twenty-third Psalm*; Virgil's *Eclogues*; Shelley's *Adonais*; part ii. section ii. member 4, of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, called "Exercise Rectified of Body and Mind"; Lord Clarendon's Eulogy of Falkland, in the *History of the Great Rebellion*; a great part of *The Opium Eater*, and Walter Pater's *Child in the House* and *Leonardo da Vinci*, added by a younger but almost equally beautiful hand.

What healing slumbers had there been slept, what ravelled sleaves of care knit up! Ancient room that had learned peacefulness in centuries, to them whose hunger bread made of wheat doth not assuage, to those that are weary beyond the help of crutches, you, ancient room in that grey immemorial house, held sweet food and refuge. To the bereaved one, sleeping here, you redeemed the step that is soundless for ever, the eyes that are among the moles, the accents that no subtlest hearing shall ever hear again;—You, ancient bed, full of the magic mightier than "powerfullest lithomancy," had blessings greater than St. Hilary's bed, on which distracted men were laid, with prayer and ceremonial, and in the morning rose restored. With you, perhaps, was Sleep herself; Sleep that sits, more august than Solomon or Minos, in a court of ultimate appeal, whither move the footsteps of those who have mourned for justice at human courts, and mourned in vain: Sleep, by whose equity divine the bruised and dungeoned innocent roams again emparadised in the fields of home, under the smiles of familiar skies: Sleep, whose mercy is not bounded, but

> droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven,

even upon the beasts. Sleep soothes the hand of

poverty with gold, and pleases with the ache of long-stolen coronets the brows of fallen kings. Had Tantalus dropped his eyelids, sleep had ministered to his lips. The firman of sleep goes forth: the peasant is enthroned and accomplished in the superb appurtenances of empire; the monarch finds himself among the placid fireside blisses of light at eventide; and those in cities pent sleep beguiles with the low summons:

Ad claras Asiæ volemus urbes.

Because sleep clothes the feet of sorrow with leaden sandals and fastens eagles' wings upon the heels of joy, I wonder that some ask at nightfall what the morrow shall see concluded: I would rather ask what sleep shall bring forth, and whither I shall travel in my dreams. It seems indeed to me that to sleep is owed a portion of the deliberation given to death. If life is an apprenticeship to death, waking may be an education for sleep. We are not thoughtful enough about sleep; yet is it more than half of that great portion of life spent really in solitude. "Nous sommes tous dans le desert! Personne ne comprend personne." In the desert what then shall we do? We truly ought to enter upon sleep as into a strange, fair chapel. Fragrant and melodious ante-chamber of the unseen, sleep is a novitiate for the beyond. Nevertheless, it is likely that those who compose themselves carefully for sleep are few as those who die holily; and most are ignorant of an art of sleeping (as of dying). The surmises, the ticking of the heart, of an anxious child,—the awful expectation of Columbus spying the fringes of a world, —such are my emotions, as I go to rest. I know not whether before the morrow I shall not pass by the stars of heaven and behold the "pale chambers of the west,"

returning before dawn. To many something like Jacob's dream often happens. The angels rising are the souls of the dreamers dignified by the insignia of sleep. Without vanity, I think in my boyhood, in my sleep, I was often in heaven. Since then, I have gone dreaming by another path, and heard the sighs and chatterings of the underworld; have gone from my pleasant bed to a fearful neighbourhood, like the fifth Emperor Henry, who, for penance, when lights were out, the watch fast asleep, walked abroad barefoot, leaving his imperial habiliments, leaving Matilda the Empress. And when the world is too much with me, when the past is a reproach harrying me with dreadful faces, the present a fierce mockery, the future an open grave, it is sweet to sleep. I have closed a well-loved book, ere the candle began to fail, that I might sleep, and let the soul take her pleasure in the deeps of eternity. It may be that the light of morning is ever cold, when it breaks in upon my sleep and disarrays the palaces of my dreams.

> Each matin bell . . .
> Knells us back to a world of death.

The earth then seems but the fragments of my dream, that was so high.

A RARE TRAVELLER: W. H. HUDSON

ERNEST RHYS

PICTURESQUE topographers and guides to famous places are many. The real discoverers and born naturalists, able to make a country new and wonderful even to the people who have lived in it all their lives, are few at the best of times.

It was the author of *The Paradox Club* who first announced, some years ago, a traveller from South America who had rediscovered Britain. The traveller's name recalled Hudson's Bay and Henry Hudson the Navigator; but his own initials were W. H. and his country was Guayana. To that side of the world, after writing several books about the wilds of London, Sussex, Wilts, Hampshire and Cornwall, Hudson later returned in his unfinished autobiography—*Far Away and Long Ago*. A strange book, as biographies and autobiographies go, treating of nature, human nature, and aspects of life that to-day are often left out of the reckoning, its pages recall some of the earlier books that made its writer known—*Idle Days in Paraguay, The Naturalist in La Plata, South American Sketches, The Purple Land that England Lost*, and the perfect little Indian romance, *Green Mansions*, which is in its wild disguise personal too.

The spell of these early South American adventures was so strong and the vision of the world they unfolded so remarkable, that originally they left one wishing

almost that the writer would write only on Guayana and the neighbouring lands. But another and older instinct was in his blood, which led him over to this country, and in his English adventures he fully kept his sense of discovery. He described them like a man coming fresh to the scene, while yet feeling the place association that usually comes only with old acquaintance.

This dual interest much increases the effect of his writing. In "A Shepherd of the Downs" he looked on that Sussex country with the eyes of an heir to an old estate, back from exile. But the land of his birth is still in his mind, and every wilder aspect of the one calls up the spirit and the colour of the other. So Wiltshire and Guayana were both in a way mother-earth to him; the South Downs remind him of La Plata, Paraguay and the Banda Oriental, and behind the scenes described in his English pages loom up the deserts and splendours of the new world seen from the top of Ytaioa. In Sussex a day on Kingston Hill (near Lewes) does the trick:

> The wide extent of unenclosed and untilled earth, its sunburnt colour and its solitariness, when no person was in sight; the vast blue sky, with no mist or cloud on it; the burning sun and wind, and the sight of thousands upon thousands of balls or stars of down, reminded me of old days on horseback on the open pampas—an illimitable waste of rust-red thistles, and the sky above covered with its million floating flecks of white.

By this reversion and his power of bringing an appreciable strangeness into a familiar bit of landscape, he expresses in a fashion peculiar to himself what we may call the primitive colours of the English uplands.

His feeling for them was that of a countryman who

was yet a far traveller, a great naturalist, an artist in wild life. To him any scene where there was room, open sky and plenty of wing-space, was haven enough, though to others it seemed treeless and uninviting. He took a place like Winterbourne Bishop—the village without any ivied relic or new hotel to attract the tourist—and made it into the mirror of that place-memory which haunts us like a repeated dream. He could take a tree, as in *El Ombú*, and make it reveal life upon life, generation after generation, in the story it tells. The result is one only attained by an uncommon conjunction of the right subject and the fit man to deal with it.

The actual narrator in *El Ombú* is a Spanish-American exile; and something of a Spanish gravity in the style much enhances the narrative illusion:

> Do you hear the mangangá, the carpenter bee, in the foliage over our heads? Look at him. Like a ball of shining gold among the green leaves, suspended in one place, humming loudly. Ah, señor, the years that are gone, the people that have lived and died, speak to me thus audibly when I am sitting here by myself. These are memories; but there are other things that come back to us from the past; I mean ghosts. Sometimes at midnight, the whole tree, from its great roots to its top-most leaves, is seen from a distance shining like white fire. What is that fire, seen of so many, which does not scorch the leaves? And sometimes, when a traveller lies down here to sleep the siesta, he hears sounds of footsteps coming and going, and noises of dogs and fowls, and of children shouting and laughing, and voices of people talking. But when he starts up and listens, the sounds grow faint, and seem at last to pass away into the tree with a low murmur as of wind among the leaves.

The story of this haunted tree is one to be read out of

doors—under English trees, let us say, that reflect by their likeness in unlikeness the great trunk of the tropical Ombú. No story that I know, written in our time, so conveys the desire of life, and the extremest cruelty of death, without once breaking the tale-teller's profound pleasure in the things he has to relate. In *Green Mansions* too, it may be remembered, the daughter of the Di-di meets her fate in a tree; and that story can be read along with *El Ombú* and the later English tale *An Old Thorn*, which form a trilogy without a parallel in English fiction.

More about the Ombú tree is to be learnt from *Far Away and Long Ago*:

> The house where I was born was named *Los Veinte-cinco Ombúes*, that is "The Twenty-five Ombú Trees." For there were in fact just so many of them in a long row. It is a tree of huge girth, and yet the wood is soft and spongy, unfit for firewood and otherwise useless, and the leaves are poisonous. Being of so little service to man it is likely to die out: but it formed a gigantic landmark on those South American plains and gave welcome shade to man and horse from the sun.

On the Pampas or on the Downs, we find how important a rôle is that of the single figure in the foreground. A tree, a shepherd, a beggar on horseback, a hermit like "Con-Stair Lovair," a patriarch like Don Evaristo Peñalva serves to focus to a fine degree the particular spot of earth that is described. On the South Downs it may be a picture of a farm-boy: "The Boy with the Thistle":

> He wore a round grey peakless cap, and for ornament he had fastened in the middle of it, where there had perhaps once been a top-knot or ball, a big woolly thistle-flower.

No doubt there are dangers in this kind of figurative particularity. Some people who attempt it become too diffuse in their wish to be exact, and end by growing garrulous over a bit of straw or a stray pig. Again, a wrong word or a touch of self-consciousness is fatal as the cough of the hunter who hopes to pass for a stone or a tree-trunk when stalking a deer. The naturalist in Hudson saves him at the point where you may think him getting too notionable for his woodcraft. Indeed it is the reaction between nature and human nature in his work which makes it interesting. The insect race and the bird race and the human race—are they not alike alive, alike confounded by the mortal decay of things? In the September pages of his Sussex book, he described "the wind sweeping through the yellow bennets with a long scythe-like sound." Then the thought of the past summer's insect life, and the noise of all those fine small voices blending into one voice, and the glistening of their minute swift-moving bodies like thin dark lines on the air, overtakes him:

> And now in so short a time, in a single day and night as it seems, it is all over, the feast and fairy dance of life; the myriads of shining gem-like bodies turned to dead dust, the countless multitudes of brilliant little individual souls dissipated into thin air, and blown whithersoever the wind blows.

It may seem that the impression this leaves is too mournful, but though a tinge of melancholy—even, it may be, of ingrained melancholy—does show in these pages, the whole sense of the spectacle of life which they bear is a large and invigorative one.

Take the sketch of Shepherd Caleb Bawcombe's mother and the black sheep-dog, Jack. The dog was of the old Welsh type once common in Wiltshire, and

a great adder-killer: "I can see her now," said Caleb, "sitting on that furze bush, in her smock and leggings, with a big hat like a man's on her head—for that's how she dressed." But presently she jumped up, crying out that she felt a snake under her, and snatched off the shawl on which she had been sitting. There, sure enough, appeared the head of an adder: and Jack dashed at the bush, seized the snake and killed it.

Take again the "History of Tommy Ierat," in the same book. The long life and curiously easy death of this man, as there told, are affecting as the end of Sir Launcelot in the *Morte d'Arthur*. One can hardly say more than that.

In the last chapter of his autobiography, by turning the glass upon himself he shows where his boyish hopes and fears were leading him, when his own story was but a quarter told, with the years of his full experience still to come:

> . . . Barring accidents, I could count on thirty, forty, even fifty years, with their summers and autumns and winters. And that was the life I desired . . . the life the heart can conceive—*the earth life*.

Of that life so conceived he was the natural historian, and it is worth note that, when other tests failed, he got his effect by looking into the most curious of all natural phenomena—himself. For Nature, the arch-revealer, when she finds a man to her mind, can make him a part of her own expression. *Idle Days in Patagonia*—a book in which the professional naturalist seems at times struggling with the natural man—serves to show how it came about. There, as he describes the bird-sounds, and the resonant quality of their notes, which tells you of the mysterious bell: "somewhere in the air,

suspended on nothing," or, as he recalls the Plains, and the grey waste, he has already let you far into his secret.

He speaks of the state of mind, induced by the change of consciousness, that comes to a man who has been long in a state of solitude. It leads, he says, to "a revelation of an unfamiliar and unsuspected nature" hidden under the nature we commonly recognise; and it is accounted for by a sudden awakening in us of the old primitive animal instinct which is often accompanied (as it is in the very young) by an intense delight. To that delight, instinctive yet spiritual in its higher development, he returns in the portrait he draws of his mother:

> Everything beautiful in sight or sound, that affected me, came associated with her, and this was especially so with flowers. Her feeling for them was little short of adoration. To her they were little voiceless messengers from heaven, symbols of a place and a beauty beyond our power to imagine. Her favourites were mostly among wild flowers that are never seen in England. But [he says] if ever I should return to the Pampas I should go out in search of them, and seeing them again, feel that I was communing with her spirit.

This is a confession which explains something of the faculty that must be possessed by one who is more than a mere chronicler of wild life—the curious power which can see earth transformed by sympathetic understanding. The delight he found in that life did not fail as time went; it grew instead, and gained a deeper purchase upon his mind. And even when he was shut out from Nature in London for long periods, sick and poor and friendless, it was his sure consolation.

One wayfaring book of his remains to be described —*Afoot in England*. It appeared more than ten years ago, but I only chanced upon it after reading the later

English books. Some chapters and pages of it are in his most characteristic vein; and they help one to find the measure of his traveller's philosophy. It has an introduction on Guide Books well worth pondering. He goes to a Guide Book town, much boomed, made notorious by railway placards; and even there he comes upon a peal of bells which recalls the Monk of Eynsham's Easter Bells—"a ringing of marvellous sweetness as if all the bells of the world, or whatsoever is sounding, had been rung together at once." He travels in Cobbett's footsteps to Coombe and "Uphusband" or Hurstbourne Tarrant; he goes to Salisbury, Stonehenge, Bath, and Wells. He considers cathedrals anew as bird resorts. At Salisbury he finds a wondrous population of birds: swallows, martins, swifts; to say nothing of daws, starlings and sparrows: even kestrels, and stock-doves, instead of the common town pigeons, are of that church-keeping company:

> Nor could birds in all this land find a more beautiful building to rest on—unless I except Wells Cathedral, solely on account of its west front, beloved of daws, where their numerous black company have so fine an appearance. Salisbury, so vast in size, is yet a marvel of beauty in its entirety. Still to me the sight of the birds' airy gambols and the sound of their voices, from the deep human-like dove tones to the perpetual subdued rippling running-water sound of the aerial martins, must always be a principal element in the beautiful effect. Nor do I know a building where Nature has done more in enhancing the loveliness of man's work with her added colouring. . . . This colouring is most beautiful [he adds] on a day of flying clouds and a blue sky with a brilliant sunshine on the vast building after a shower.

A cathedral to him, as to Ibañez, is a cathedral and something more. It is a part of the indigenous growth

of the country, and, in exploring it, he is like St. Brandan in *The Golden Legend* discovering an Isle of Birds.

A discoverer of strange things in familiar places, Hudson saw birds as another race, not so far from our own, a little more aerial, a little less earthy. At another remove, the insect race is again behind, or a little below the bird race. The lowest of all, I am afraid, is of the homunculus type—one which invariably moves his spleen. For we must admit that he is splenetic at times. He is angry with the Toby Philpots of Chichester; he is annoyed with Cornish folk—I imagine because they are not like the Devon folk he loves so well. He is angry with fashionable women who go to Holy Communion with aigrettes in their hats. He is annoyed by dirty little boys who follow their instincts, and stone or catch little birds. But this is only because he is a kind-hearted vagabond who is ready to love all creatures that on earth do dwell, so long as they are not too degenerate to preserve their natural instincts. He is one among the rare itinerants who have revealed the beauty of this country by their affectionate art—including White of Selborne, Old Crome, Constable, Turner, Richard Jefferies, Wordsworth, and certain unnamed and undistinguished provincial poets. There are pages of his that enshrine scenes and memories of places to be ranked with Old Crome's "Mousehold Heath," the picture of Appin sketched by Dorothy Wordsworth in her *Tour in Scotland*, Dyer's *Grongar Hill*, Bewick's thumb-nail vignettes of Prudhoe-on-Tyne, and Constable's "Old Sarum."

In days to come when nearly all the wildness of Britain is tamed, men will look back with envy to Hudson's account of the birds in Savernake, and of the London

daws, now growing scarcer every year, that rose to fly with the homing crows as they passed over Kensington Gardens.

Of two more books which are part of his English cycle, the first is *Birds in Town and Village*, which has a greenfinch interlude for the consolation of true bird-lovers, a charming tale of a duet between a girl and a nightingale, and many other characteristic vagabond passages. What will surprise some readers, less tolerant than the naturalist himself, is a critical appreciation of a concert of London sparrows. The fit sequel to that is the chapter on "Chanticleer"; and there are other London contributions and notably one on the moor-hens in Hyde Park. The book is illustrated by some wonderfully brilliant bird-portraits by E. J. Detmold —brilliantly coloured and sunlit. Indeed the blue-tit and goldfinch, in one picture, are almost dazzling—every wing-feather detailed like a fan.

The other is *The Book of a Naturalist*, which adds some delightful pages, natural and human-natural, to the writer's account of Britain re-discovered. It opens with a pine wood, and it ends with earthworms and an experiment with acacia-leaves to test the value of the worm as a lawn-maker. Two chapters on the mole, two on the heron considered as an ancient British notable and aristocrat, and four on serpents, native and foreign, serve to carry on the record. The story of the she-rat that communed with her natural enemy, a cat, and who in the end tried to steal the fluff from the cat's abundant side-whiskers, and so provoked a misunderstanding, is an unexpected diversion, since Hudson was not fond of rats, and has even been known to call them those "curséd cattle." But the book is above all to

be gratefully remembered for its scenes and episodes of the wild chronicle of the English shires:—an enchanting June evening in the valley of the Wiltshire Avon, when the ghost-moths were out upon their love-dance over the dusky meadows; an adder episode in the New Forest, when the creature proved to have an under surface of the most exquisite turquoise blue; or a brown-purple field of fritillaries, or ginny-flowers, which are of the wild lily kind, pendulous as a harebell, and of a delicate pink chequered with dark maroon-purple.

These voyages and discoveries seemed to occur to Hudson so easily, that they leave one newly penetrated with the sense of the wild splendour, the beauty inexhaustible, of the new-old country that he travelled. No need for him to go back to Guayana, since he found his tropics in a Wiltshire meadow, and his wood beyond the world in Hants or Dorset. There are many wild places—downs, woods and lowlands—that will miss hereafter that tall, grey, falcon-faced traveller.

A NEGLECTED HEROINE OF SHAKESPEARE

JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY: *Countries of the Mind*[1]

Coriolanus is, if not one of the greatest, one of the most masterly of Shakespeare's plays. If it does not hold all the spiritual significance of any of the three great tragedies, if it has not the profound emotional appeal of *Antony and Cleopatra* or *Julius Cæsar*, it indubitably belongs to the same period of serene mastery of theme and expression. French critics continually, and English critics occasionally—these last improperly obeisant before the prestige of French criticism—have said that *Coriolanus* is Shakespeare's most perfect work of art. While we deplore their language, we understand their meaning. *Coriolanus* is a magnificent example of creative control. Its design is, as Mr. Walter Sickert has well said of Poussin's painting, "marshalled." Its economy, its swiftness, its solidity, its astonishing clarity and pregnancy of language are not only satisfying and exhilarating in themselves, but may have a peculiar and profound appropriateness to the warlike argument. Just as the looser texture of *Antony and Cleopatra* seems to be the inevitable garment of the decaying soldiership of Antony, so the exact and unrelenting pattern of *Coriolanus* seems essential to the unfaltering decision and the unswerving success of the earlier Roman general. The play marches onward like a legion in the days when Roman soldiers were Romans still.

[1] Published in America by Messrs. E. P. Dutton and Co.

Perhaps it is this quality of Roman relentlessness and inevitability which has made it unsympathetic to the general English taste, for among us it is surely the least popular of Shakespeare's great plays. In France, on the contrary, it is said to be the most popular; probably not for the same reason. Beyond the fact that Coriolanus is a familiar and traditional hero of the French theatre, the concentrated and controlled dramatic action which distinguishes Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* from his other great dramas appeals directly to the French palate. Since, however, this only means that *Coriolanus* is an unusually well-constructed play, it cannot account for the general reluctance of English people to admit it to their affections. The reason, one imagines, is that it is too Roman. An English audience, and English readers, for that matter, like to surrender themselves to their heroes. They can idolise Brutus as an eloquent Hampden, and sympathise with an Antony lost in the embraces of his serpent of old Nile. A martyr for political liberty, a martyr for love, these are intimate and comprehensible to us; but a martyr to the aristocratic idea is not. He is an alien; there is too much of the British constitution in our blood for him to warm it.

In other and more familiar terms, Coriolanus is an unsympathetic hero, and all the characters of the play, save one, to whom we shall return, strike chill upon the general heart. Volumnia is altogether too much like that forbidding Spartan mother who haunted our schooldays with her grim farewell: "Return with your shield or upon it"; Menenius is too cynical, too worldly-wise to move us humanly in his discomfiture; Brutus and Sicinius arouse neither sympathy nor disdain, and the emotion we feel at the knightly generosity of Aufidius

is dashed too soon by his confession that, if he cannot overthrow Coriolanus by fair means, he will by foul. Coriolanus himself we cannot like, any more than a schoolboy can like Themistocles. One may despise one's country, one may hate one's country, but one may not lead an enemy against her. These are primitive ethics, no doubt, but they are profound, and though they may be alien to æsthetic criticism, they have their roots deep in the human heart. The writer who ignores them deliberately imperils the universality of his appeal.

We can see clearly enough why *Coriolanus* should be that among Shakespeare's greater plays which is most neglected by the public, and therefore the least familiar to the stage. It is not so easy to understand why it should have been so neglected by the critics, unless, perhaps, they are not quite so immune from the effects of instinctive sympathy as in theory they ought to be. By the critics I mean the true literary critics, not the textual "philologers." These have been busy enough, sometimes to good effect, as with the whole line which they have neatly restored from North's Plutarch, but at least as often in a spirit perhaps best described as one of slight impatience with poetry. This is, however, not the occasion to catalogue the things they have done which they ought not to have done; but only to try to show that they have also left undone a few things that they ought to have done. Far from me at this moment the desire to shiver a lance in open battle with the editors; I only crave their leave to ride to the rescue of an all vanished lady to whom they have had no time to stretch out a helping hand.

All that needs to be premised is the simple fact that *Coriolanus* was first printed in the Folio of 1623, and that we have no other authority for the text. On the

whole we may say that the Folio text is careless enough, although I believe that—obvious misprints apart—it is at least as near to Shakespeare's original as most modern recensions, which take us as much farther away by some of their readings as they bring us nearer to it by others. The most persistent weakness of the Folio *Coriolanus* is the haphazard distribution of lines among the speakers. One of the most palpable of these blunders has been rectified by common assent. In Act III. (scene i., l. 237), when Menenius is trying hard to persuade Coriolanus to moderate his contemptuous language towards the plebs, the Folio gives him these impossible words:

> I would they were barbarians, as they are
> Though in Rome litter'd: not Romans, as they are not
> Though calved i' th' porch o' th' Capitol.

It is as certain that Menenius did not speak them as it is certain that Coriolanus did. They have been properly restored to the hero. The Folio *Coriolanus* then, although the true and authentic original, is far from impeccable.

So much by way of preamble to the attempt at rescue.

Of all the characters in *Coriolanus* one alone can be said to be truly congenial; and she is the least substantial of them all. Virgilia, Coriolanus's wife, though she is present throughout the whole of four scenes, speaks barely a hundred words. But a sudden, direct light is cast upon her by a phrase which takes our breaths with beauty, when Coriolanus welcomes her on his triumphant return as: "My gracious silence!" Magical words! They give a miraculous substance to our fleeting, fading glimpses of a lovely vision which seems to tremble away from the clash of arms and pride that

reverberates through the play. Behind the disdainful warrior and his Amazonian mother, behind the vehement speech of this double Lucifer, the exquisite, timid spirit of Virgilia shrinks out of sight into the haven of her quiet home. One can almost hear the faint click of the door behind as it shuts her from the noise of brawling tongues. Yet in her presence, and in the memory of her presence, Coriolanus becomes another and a different being. It is true we may listen in vain for other words so tender as "My gracious silence!" from his lips. A man who has one love alone finds only one such phrase in a lifetime. But in the heat of victorious battle, when Coriolanus would clasp Cominius in his arms for joy, he discovers in himself another splendid phrase to remember his happiness with Virgilia:

> Oh! let me clip ye
> In arms as sound as when I woo'd, in heart
> As merry, as when our nuptial day was done
> And tapers burned to bedward.

And even in the anguish of the final struggle between his honour and his heart, when his wife comes with his mother to intercede for Rome, it is in the very accents of passionate devotion that he cries to Virgilia:

> Best of my flesh,
> Forgive my tyranny; but do not say
> For that, "Forgive our Romans." Oh! a kiss
> Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge!
> Now, by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss
> I carried from thee, dear, and my true lip
> Hath virgin'd it e'er since.

In the proud, unrelenting man of arms these sudden softenings are wonderful. They conjure up the picture

of a more reticent and self-suppressed Othello, and we feel that, to strike to the heart through Coriolanus's coat of mail, it needed an unfamiliar beauty of soul, a woman whose delicate nature stood apart, untouched by the broils and furies of her lord's incessant battling with the Roman people and the enemies of Rome.

In the play Virgilia speaks barely a hundred words. But they are truly the speech of a "gracious silence," as precious and revealing as they are rare. She appears first (Act I., scene iii.) in her own house, sitting silent at her sewing. Coriolanus has gone to the wars. Volumnia tries to kindle her with something of her own Amazonian ecstasy at the thought of men in battle. "I tell thee, daughter, I sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a man-child than now in first seeing he had proved himself a man." Virgilia's reply, the first words she speaks in the play, touch to the quick of the reality of war and her own unquiet mind:

> But had he died in the business, madam, how then?

The thoughts of her silence thus revealed, she says no more until chattering Valeria, for all the world like one of the fashionable ladies in Colonel Repington's diary, is announced. She has come to drag her out to pay calls. Virgilia tries to withdraw. Volumnia will not let her, and even while the maid is in the room waiting to know whether she may show Valeria in, she bursts into another ecstatic vision of her son in the midst of battle: "his bloody brow with his mailed hand then wiping." Again Virgilia reveals herself:

> His bloody brow! O Jupiter, no blood!

Valeria enters on a wave of small talk. She has seen Virgilia's little boy playing. The very image of his

father; "such a confirmed countenance." She had watched him chase a butterfly, catching it and letting it go, again and again. "He did so set his teeth and tear it; oh, I warrant how he mammocked it!"

> *Volum.* One on 's father's moods.
> *Val.* Indeed, la, it is a noble child.
> *Virg.* A crack, madam.

"An *imp*, madam!" The meaning leaps out of the half-contemptuous word. Don't call him a noble child for his childish brutality. It pains, not rejoices Virgilia. Nor, for all the persuasions of Volumnia and Valeria, will she stir out of the house. She does not want society; she cannot visit "the good lady that lies in." She is as firm as she is gentle.

> 'Tis not to save labour, nor that I want love.

Simply that she is anxious and preoccupied. She will not "turn her solemness out of doors"; she cannot. Coriolanus is at the wars.

So, in two dozen words and a world of unspoken contrast Virgilia is given to us: her horror of brutality and bloodshed, her anxiety for her husband, her reticence, her firmness. She is not a bundle of nerves, but she is full of the aching fears of love. Truly, "a gracious silence."

She next appears when the news is come that Coriolanus has triumphed (Act II., scene i.). Volumnia and Valeria are talking with Menenius. She stands aside listening. He is sure to be wounded, says Menenius, he always is. She breaks out: "Oh, no, no, no!" She retires into her silence again while Volumnia proudly tells the story of her son's twenty-five wounds. "In troth, there's wondrous things spoke of him," says

chattering Valeria. Virgilia murmurs: "The gods grant them true!" "True! Pow-wow!" says Volumnia, in hateful scorn: one can see her sudden turn, hear her rasping voice. Virgilia is not one of the true breed of Roman wives and mothers. And indeed she is not. She is thinking of wounds, not as glorious marks of bravery, but as the mutilated body of the man she adores. Wounds, wounds! They talk of nothing but wounds. Virgilia suffers in silence. Coriolanus is wounded. That is a world wounded to her.

Coriolanus enters, swathed in bandages, unrecognisable. He kneels before his mother. Then he sees Virgilia standing apart, weeping silently. These are the words of the Folio text. The spelling has been modernised; the punctuation has been left untouched.

Corio. My gracious silence, hail:
Would'st thou have laughed, had I come coffin'd home
That weep'st to see me triumph? Ah my dear,
Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear
And mothers that lack sons.
Mene. Now the Gods crown thee.
Corio. Oh my sweet lady, pardon . . .
Virg. And live you yet?
Val. I know not where to turn.
Oh welcome home: and welcome General,
And y'are welcome all.

The first two of these speeches and their speakers contain no difficulty. But, obviously, "And live you yet? Oh, my sweet lady, pardon," does not belong to Cominius. On his lips it is nonsense. The editors have resolved the problem by giving the line to Coriolanus, and the following speech of Volumnia to Valeria. Coriolanus is supposed to say to Menenius: "And live you yet?" then, suddenly catching sight of Valeria, to beg her pardon for not having seen her before.

We have a free hand in disposing of the line. There is no objection to Volumnia's speech being given to Valeria, whose effusive manner it suits better. But to make Coriolanus surprised that Menenius is still alive is pointless; he had no reason to suppose that the arm-chair hero was dead. Moreover, to make him turn to Valeria and say: "Oh, my sweet lady, pardon," is to give the great warrior the manners of a carpet knight.

Now think of the relation between Virgilia and Coriolanus; remember how her imagination has been preoccupied by his wounds; see her in imagination weeping at the pitiful sight of her wounded husband — and read the lines through without regard to the speakers. It will, I believe, occur to any one with an instinct for psychology that: "And live you yet?" takes up Coriolanus's previous words. "Ah, my dear," he has said, "it is the women who have no husbands who weep as you do." Then, and not till then, Virgilia breaks silence: "And live you yet?" And are you really my husband? Is this thing of bandages the lord of my heart? At her sudden, passionate words Coriolanus understands her tears. He has a glimpse of the anguish of her love. He has been an unimaginative fool. "Oh, my sweet lady, pardon!" This, I suggest, is the way the passage should be read:

Corio. Ah, my dear,
Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear
And mothers that lack sons.
Mene. Now the gods crown thee!
Virg. And live you yet?
Corio. Oh, my sweet lady, pardon . . .
Val. I know not where to turn.

And to my own mind it is an essential part of the beauty of the passage that these few lightning words

of love should flash through the hubbub of Menenius's welcome and Valeria's effusive congratulations.

Virgilia appears again in the scene following Coriolanus's banishment (Act IV., scene ii.). Here the alterations necessary are self-evident, and it is difficult to understand why they have not been made before. Again the test of reading through the short scene with an imaginative realisation of Virgilia must be applied. Again her exquisite timidity of speech must be contrasted, as Shakespeare deliberately contrasted it, with Volumnia's headstrong and contemptuous anger. It will then, I believe, be plain that of Volumnia's final words:

> Anger's my meat; I sup upon myself
> And so shall starve with feeding. Come, let's go.
> Leave this faint puling and lament as I do
> In anger, Juno-like. Come, come, come,

the last two lines are addressed to Virgilia alone. Besides Volumnia herself only the two tribunes, Brutus and Sicinius, are there. The lines cannot be spoken to them. Only Virgilia remains. She is not angry, but sad, at Coriolanus's banishment, just as in his triumph she was sad, not joyful: and just as then, Volumnia scorns her for her weakness.

Now read again the Folio text, which is that of the modern editions of lines 11–28. Volumnia meets the two tribunes who have been the prime movers in her son's banishment:

> *Volum.* Oh y'are well met:
> Th' hoarded plague a' th' gods requite your love.
> *Mene.* Peace, peace, be not so loud.
> *Volum.* If that I could for weeping, you should hear,
> Nay, and you shall hear some. Will you be gone?
> *Virg.* You shall stay too: I would I had the power
> To say so to my husband.

Sicin. Are you mankind?
Volum. Aye, fool, is that a shame. Note but this, fool,
Was not a man my father? Had'st thou foxship
To banish him that struck more blows for Rome
That thou hast spoken words.
Sicin. Oh blessed Heavens!
Volum. More noble blows than ever your wise words.
And for Rome's good, I'll tell thee what: yet go:
Nay, but thou shalt stay too: I would my son
Were in Arabia, and thy tribe before him.
His good sword in his hand.
Sicin. What then?
Virg. What then? He'd make an end of thy posterity
Volum. Bastards, and all.
Virg. Good man, the wounds that he does bear for Rome!

It is obvious that the peremptory "You shall stay too" (l. 14) is not spoken by Virgilia. It is as completely discordant with her character, and with Volumnia's description of her behaviour during the scene ("this faint puling"), and it is accordant with the character of Volumnia. Volumnia forces first one, then the other tribune to stay; we can see her clutch them by the sleeve, one in either of her nervous hands. At her words Virgilia interposes a sighing aside: "I would I had the power to say so to my husband."

It is equally clear that Virgilia cannot possibly have indulged in the brutal imagination of line 27, "What then? He'd make an end of thy posterity." There is no stop at the end of the line in the Folio; it runs on to the next half line; and the whole line and a half undoubtedly belong to Volumnia. A simple transposition of the rubrics is all that is needed.

Volum. What then?
He'd make an end of thy posterity
Bastards and all.
Virg. Good man, the wounds that he does bear for Rome!

It is another sighing aside and another indication that Virgilia is haunted by the memory of those wounds she could not bear to see. Unless these asides are restored to her, and the brutal words taken away, quite apart from the violation of her character, there is no point in Volumnia's sneer at her "faint puling."

Virgilia appears for the last time as the silent participant in Volumnia's embassy of intercession. For the first and only time a bodily vision of her beauty is given to us, when Coriolanus cries:

> What is thy curtsy worth or those dove's eyes
> Which can make gods forsworn? I melt and am not
> Of stronger earth than others.

She has no need of words to make her appeal; her eyes speak for her. She says simply:

> My lord and husband!
> *Corio.* These eyes are not the same I wore in Rome.
> *Virg.* The sorrow that delivers us thus changed makes you think so.
> *Corio.* Like a dull actor now,
> I have forgot my part, and I am out
> Even to a full disgrace. Best of my flesh
> Forgive my tyranny; but do not say
> For that, "Forgive our Romans." Oh! a kiss
> Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge!
> Now, by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss
> I carried from thee, dear, and my true lip
> Hath virgin'd it e'er since.

After this Virgilia speaks but a single sentence more. Volumnia ends her pleading with an impassioned adjuration to her son:

> For myself, son,
> I purpose not to wait on Fortune till
> These wars determine: if I cannot persuade thee
> Rather to show a noble grace to both parts

Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner
March to assault thy country than to tread—
Trust to't, thou shalt not—on thy mother's womb
That brought thee to this world.
Virg. Ay, and mine
That brought you forth this boy, to keep your name
Living to time.

Virgilia's words contain much in little space. They, her last words in the play, are the first in which she shows herself at one with her husband's mother. Always before Volumnia has been angry, contemptuous, spiteful, malevolent towards Virgilia; and Virgilia has held her peace without yielding an inch of ground to Volumnia's vehemence. We have felt throughout that they are the embodiments of two opposed spirits—of pride and love. Not that Volumnia's pride has changed to love; it is the same pride of race that moves her, the fear of disgrace to a noble name:

The end of war's uncertain; but this is certain,
That, if thou conquer Rome, the benefit
Which thou shalt thereby reap is such a name
Whose repetition shall be dogged with curses,
Whose chronicle thus writ: "The man was noble
But with his last attempt he wip'd it out,
Destroy'd his country, and his name remains
To the ensuing age abhorr'd."

But now these spirits of love and pride are reconciled; for once they make the same demand. Volumnia pleads that her son shall remember honour. Virgilia that her husband shall remember mercy. The double appeal is too strong. Coriolanus yields to it, and pays the penalty.

Not one of the readjustments suggested in this essay calls for the alteration of a single word in the text of the Folio. They consist solely in a redistribution of words

among the speakers, and in the most complicated instance a redistribution of some kind has long since been seen to be necessary and long since been made. I venture to think that together they will help to disengage the true outline of one of Shakespeare's most delicate minor heroines. There was no place for a Desdemona in the story of Coriolanus; but in a few firm touches Shakespeare has given us a woman whose silence we can feel to be the unspoken judgment on the pride of arms and the pride of race which are the theme of the play.

For it is surely not against the democratic idea that Coriolanus is tried and found wanting. In spite of Signor Croce's assurance to the contrary, it is impossible to believe that the contempt for the city mob with which the play is penetrated was not shared by Shakespeare himself. The greatest writers strive to be impersonal, and on the whole they achieve impersonality; but, though they carve out an image that is unlike themselves, they cannot work wholly against the grain of their own convictions. Prejudice will out. And the loathing of the city mob which is continually expressed in Shakespeare's work and comes to a head in *Coriolanus* was indubitably his own. It is indeed less plausible to deny this, than it would be to argue that at a time when his genius was seizing on themes of a greater tragic scope, it was his sympathy with the anti-plebeian colour of the Coriolanus story that led Shakespeare to choose it for his play.

This is not a question of Shakespeare's political views. We do not know what they were, and we have no means of finding out. Signor Croce is thus far right. But when he goes on to assure us that it is a wild-goose chase to look to discover where Shakespeare's

sympathies lay in the world in which he lived, we can point to the knowledge we actually have of every great writer. We do know their sympathies. It may be an illegitimate knowledge, but the laws it violates are laws of Signor Croce's own devising. It is his own logical fiat that holds the kingdoms of the æsthetic and the practical asunder. In fact, there is no dividing line between them. A writer's predispositions in practical life do constantly colour his æsthetic creation, and every great writer who has been conscious of his activity has either confessed the fact or glorified in it.

We know that Shakespeare detested the city mob. If we care to know why, we have only to exercise a little imagination and picture to ourselves the finest creative spirit in the world acting in his own plays before a pitful of uncomprehending, base mechanicals. The man who used that terrible phrase, who "gored his own thoughts"[1] to wring shillings from the pockets of the greasy, grinning crowd in front of him, has no cause to love them; and Shakespeare did not. He was an aristocrat, not in the political sense, but as every man of fine nerves who shrinks from contact with the coarse-nerved is an aristocrat, as Anton Tchehov was an aristocrat when he wrote: "Alas, I shall never be a Tolstoyan. In women I love beauty above all things, and in the history of mankind, culture expressed in carpets, spring carriages, and keenness of wit."

Shakespeare could not therefore measure Coriolanus against the democratic idea in which he did not believe; nor could he pit the patriotic idea against him, for Coriolanus was immune from a weakness for his country.

[1] Alas, 'tis true, I have gone here and there
And made myself a motley to the view,
Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear.

It is domestic love that pierces his armour and inflicts the mortal wound. And perhaps in Shakespeare's mind the power of that love was manifested less in the silver speech of the vehement and eloquent Volumnia than in the golden silence of the more delicate woman to whom we have attempted to restore a few of her precious words.

THE ART OF PACKING

SIR W. ROBERTSON NICOLL: *The Day Book of Claudius Clear*

THE art of packing is confessedly rare and difficult, and I never mastered it. In the old days when I had to do my best, there was nothing for it but brute force. A bag or a trunk was a thing to be subdued and overcome. When a student, I purchased as large a box as I could afford, and when the end of the session arrived I put everything into my box, and then sat down on it till it was brought to reason. The results were not entirely satisfactory, but they were the best I could achieve.

Later on my difficulties increased. Like most men I have an ineradicable prejudice against luggage. When I put a bag or a box into the luggage van it is with small hope of ever seeing it again. For ten minutes after in the railway carriage I think of how I shall be able to get on if my luggage vanishes into space. For those who cannot learn to pack, the one resource is to get some one who will pack for them. Wonderful is the competency of some packers. They put in everything you want, and nothing else. They put it in small compass. They pack it in such a way that it emerges uninjured. I praise and admire, and thank them. If there is trouble it comes in at the other end. When you have to return you may find, if left alone, that you cannot get the things back into their place. In that case you will be followed for days after your return by mysterious parcels sent from the hotel. This is humiliating enough, but perhaps you cannot help it. A delightful

writer whose hand, alas! is cold to-day has described the adventures of a husband and wife who agreed on their honeymoon to have their luggage put together. The lady had her preferences, and so had the gentleman. She wished to have with her five paint-boxes, six sketch-books, two cameras, three kodaks, a butterfly net and box, a camp stool, a formidable array of hats, three sunshades of different colours, and a collection of rugs and wraps fit for the Arctic regions. They were going to the Italian Lakes at the hottest time of the year. The gentleman despised all these things, but he could not get on without a large assortment of boots and shoes, and a series of volumes on the geological strata of the Alps and the Renaissance in Lombardy. "Trouble followed," as the theological student said in summarising the experience of Jonah. At the end of the journey, the lady found her best comb smashed, a precious silver mirror shivered to atoms, her dresses crushed, and her hats reduced to jellies.

I thought about my many adventures in packing the other day when I was dictating some articles for a half-penny paper. In these journals a thousand words is the limit, and if you can get your matter into five hundred words, so much the better. Every well-edited journal seeks to have a justification for everything it prints. Many people fancy that editors have difficulty in filling their columns. If they have, it is a proof that they are incompetent. Every journal in a healthy state is compelled to reject constantly articles with a good claim to publication. But in a halfpenny daily, where many subjects must be touched, the problem is acute. It is a question of packing. In the first place, no article should be packed in it that is not needed. Every paragraph should be its own justification. Then the articles

should be skilfully packed, and not rumpled and crushed. It is no credit to get many things into a small bag if they all emerge damaged. Many writers would find it useful to take a thousand words of their writing and reduce the thousand to five hundred without impairing the effect. It is not easy with writing that is worth anything. A theological professor, criticising a student's sermon, said that the half of it had better be omitted, and it did not matter which half. You cannot condense your article simply by cutting it in two. You must rewrite it upon another scale. It is not enough to be brief. You must be interesting, and it is possible and very easy to be both brief and tedious. The editing of the ideal halfpenny newspaper, simple as it seems to the outsider, is in reality as difficult as the editing of *The Times*, for every headed paragraph, however short, is a study in the art of condensation. I quite understand that certain subjects cannot be satisfactorily dealt with in very brief articles or paragraphs. Nevertheless, the man who runs to length should suspect himself. There are preachers who think that the religion of the country is dying out because people object to sermons an hour long. But the old story comes up irresistibly. If a man cannot strike oil in twenty minutes, he had better cease boring.

This leads me to say that the art of packing is the art of life. What shall we do with the day? Here are the twelve hours before us. What work can we put into them? A very favourite theme of Addison's *Spectator* was the waste of the day, especially by fine ladies. This is a specimen:

Saturday.—Rose at eight o'clock in the morning. Sat down to my toilette.

From eight to nine. Shifted a patch for half an hour

before I could determine it. Fixed it above my left eyebrow.

From nine to twelve. Drank my tea and dressed.

From twelve to two. At chapel. A great deal of good company. Mem.—The third air in the new opera. Lady Blithe dressed frightfully.

From three to four. Dined. Miss Kitty called upon me to go to the opera before I was risen from table.

From dinner to six. Drank tea. Turned off a footman for being rude to Veny.

Six o'clock. Went to the opera. I did not see Mr. Froth till the beginning of the second act. Mr. Froth talked to a gentleman in a black wig; bowed to a lady in the front box. Mr. Froth and his friend clapped Nicolini in the third act. Mr. Froth cried out: "Ancora." Mr. Froth led me to my chair. I think he squeezed my hand.

Eleven at night. Went to bed. Melancholy dreams. Methought Nicolini said he was Mr. Froth.

Sunday.—Indisposed.

There are people who never waste a moment, who get up very early, and have done much work by breakfast, who are always pulling out pen, pencil, or needle, while others seem unemployed. I remember Robertson Smith telling me that he learned Italian when he was dressing. This perhaps may be overdone. There may be seasons and spaces which it is not worth while to fill with an occupation. Is it worth while to read at meals or out of doors? I think not, unless one is very lonely indeed. Haydon, the painter, tells us a pleasant story of Sir Walter Scott. Sir Walter went to see a picture of Haydon's which was on view. He arrived before the door was open, and was told that the man would not be long in coming. He quietly sat down and waited. Haydon found him thus, and delightedly records it as a beautiful trait of this great genius. It was a beautiful trait,

but many of us would have tried to fill up the short interval somehow.

The truth is that in order to give out you must take in, and that the time spent in absorbing is just as necessary and just as well spent as the time spent in testifying. The other day I was in a country town, and took out of the circulating library two books I had not seen for years—the *Life of Bishop Wilberforce* and the *Life of Dean Hook*. Both were indefatigable men. Of Wilberforce it was said that he could write two letters at once, one with his left hand and the other with his right. Also it is said that he could dictate seven letters at one and the same time. I do not believe these stories, but many people do believe them. Wilberforce was an early riser, he was always writing, always preaching, always travelling, and being a man of fine gifts, he won a great position. Yet his life on the whole was impaired and disappointed. He never succeeded in achieving the place of his ambition. He saw over and over again men preferred to him who were conspicuously his inferiors. He came under a general suspicion of insincerity. The queen suspected him, and so did many of her subjects. Yet I think unprejudiced readers of his letters and journals will see that in intention he was always honest. What injured him was that he knew nothing. He read practically nothing, he was not in any sense a scholar; he thought the time spent in study was wasted time. In spite of his ignorance he rushed headlong into controversies where no man can do any good who is not equipped with the results of patient and scholarly investigation. Thus he assaulted the authors of *Essays and Reviews* in the *Quarterly*, and declared them enemies of the Christian faith. In the same periodical he made a furious onslaught on Darwin. It is safe to say that

Wilberforce had given moments to science where Darwin had given days, and his article is simply presumptuous nonsense. He rushed into a fray about Bishop Hampden, and it turned out in the end that he had not read Hampden's books. Having got into false positions, he had to get out of them as best he could, and he did not get out of them well. How much more Wilberforce would have accomplished if he had been content to be quiet at times! Dean Hook was another example of immense and prolonged industry. He, too, was an early riser. He sometimes wrote three sermons in one day. Hook was a reader as well as a writer, and he has left many books behind him, but I doubt whether any of them will live. There was no touch of intellectual distinction about him, nothing at all of the saving grace of style. Honest, laborious, bold, ambitious, he did good and even great work in his day, perhaps the best work that he could accomplish, and yet one imagines that under conditions of more leisure and less absorption he might have done something of another kind. For myself, I particularly dislike people who profess to be busy, and seem to be hurried, people who look at the clock when you visit them, or when they visit you. We must not try to pack life too close.

THE END

MADE AT THE TEMPLE PRESS LETCHWORTH IN GREAT BRITAIN

KS-021-538